This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/

600078737

FRANK AMOR.

FRANK AMOR:

A Novel.

BY

JAJABEE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

"Love hath no wherefore."

MIND IS STRONGER THAN MATTER

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

London:
SAMUEL TINSLEY,
10 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND:
1876.

[*All rights reserved.*]

251. d. 528.

FRANK AMOR.

CHAPTER I.

There is a curious piece of imagery in the Hindoo's Bible which, I have thought, may be taken to illustrate, in poetic form, the uncoloured routine of human life. It has been translated thus: "The Time-god, appearing in the shape of the Dwarf-moment, strides over all creation with the three giant strides of Past, Present, and Future, and, by measuring, preserves it from formlessness and chaos."

My own early life was mainly distinguished by a daily round of almost unvarying incidents, consisting of meals, study, and play, at regularly-apportioned intervals—each cycle being rounded off with an act of sleep extending through eight hours of the "Dwarf-moment's" eternal march. I suppose the majority of people live their lives, from beginning to end, after the uneventful manner which charac-

terized my own early career. It is perhaps a thing to be thankful for, that life should pass chiefly in such unvaried order.

A chastening melancholy steals over my mind when I recall the memories of my youth. I remember my father's house as one wherein the charms of existence were rightly estimated and appreciated. The motto of the ancient philosopher, "Let nothing evil enter here," might have been appropriately inscribed on its portals.

My father was in a Government office, and enjoyed a salary sufficient to enable him to live in comfort. He had very refined tastes, which he gratified as far as his means would allow. He had no idea of economy; but, happily for himself and his family, his improvidence was never productive of serious consequence.

My estimable parents loved each other throughout their mortal partnership, I believe, with the fervent ardour of sweethearts rather than with the calmer affection of man and wife. They had three children, Edith, Edward, and myself. Edward was placed, at the age of sixteen, in a merchant's office, and obtained three years afterwards a good situation in Bombay. My enterprising brother

left home, thinking to see us all again; but, alas! he never again beheld any one of his near kindred excepting myself. Edith, the pet of our family circle, married a handsome, bold young fellow, who shortly afterwards was gazetted to a captaincy in a native Indian regiment. Their happiness was indeed short-lived. She and her gallant husband were cruelly murdered at the outbreak of the Sepoy mutiny. The shock from the awful news from India brought my tender-hearted mother to the grave; and, in less than three months, my grief-stricken father rejoined her whom he had loved so well.

CHAPTER II.

I HAD nearly completed my eighteenth year when my parents died, and had kept one term at the London University for the practice of medicine. I was not entirely without resources, for my father had insured his life for a considerable amount. I felt totally unable then to encounter the rigid loneliness of private chambers, and was about to seek a home in some family, when, to my great joy, I received a conjoint offer from the Rev. Mr. Ellice, a dear friend of my late father's, and Mrs. Ellice, to take up my abode with them for a time.

My good friend Mr. Ellice was a stout, middle-aged gentleman, with a florid complexion, and features all rather large. He possessed an easy, benevolent disposition, and was hen-pecked, I believe, to a greater degree than any poor man since the days of Socrates. Mrs. Ellice was a lady of somewhat selfish nature, and had, unfortunately for her own happiness,

as well as for the peace of those persons in frequent contact with her, suffered a naturally cross temper to gain complete ascendency. She had, however, many good qualities, being an excellent housewife, and a devoted mother; and her conduct towards me, so long as I resided under her roof, was kindly and sympathetic in the highest degree. The worthy clergyman and his partner had a son and daughter.

Hugh was a well-principled, easy sort of fellow, and very soft-hearted. He was also rather deficient in firmness, which was owing greatly to his mother's indulgence. Emily resembled her brother in her high principle and kind-heartedness; but, unlike him, she was firm of character, and had a power of intellect, and a delicacy of sentiment, which are bestowed only upon the most favoured of Dame Nature's children.

I feel myself quite at a loss when I attempt to describe the fair Emily Ellice. I am almost inclined to effect a compromise in my task, by affirming that the maiden of my high admiration was a very counterpart of Murillo's world-famed "Virgin of the Crescent." Yet, as I contemplate my borrowed pictorial illustration, I find the presumed resemblance to consist only

in sentiment. The Madonna has dark hair and eyes, and the normal olive complexion of an Iberian woman; whereas the young English beauty has hair of a golden-red tint, eyes of a clear, deep, green colour—like the sea, where it is perfectly pure—and a complexion as fine, perhaps, as could be possessed in conjunction with sound health. Emily has a faultlessly straight nose, with nostrils of a beautiful shell-pink tint; a calm, expressive mouth, containing a set of pearly teeth; and a softly-rounded chin, forming with the cheek an outline of ineffable charm. Then, as to her form, I can only say it was characterized by a faultless outline of delicious curves.

With regard to my particular fancy, in finding a remarkable likeness to exist between the "Madonna" and Emily, I feel impressed by a sense of their relationship; inasmuch as each exhibits the same rare spiritual expressiveness. Emily walked gracefully, and spoke with a melodious voice; but seemed never to court admiration. She was singular, almost blameworthy, in her total absence of coquetry. Though unable to diminish the attractiveness of her manifold charms, she could not fail—notwithstanding her severely plain apparel, and her rejection of extraneous ornament—to become

an object of deep admiration to those men who reserve their affectionate regard for quiescent beauty and innate worth.

At the very beginning of my residence with the rector's family, my heart throbbed with love for the daughter of the house; but, somehow, I was unable to imagine anything like emotion on her part. I watched her with a soul-felt delight, but was quite unable to overcome a strange shyness which always visited me when in the society of this saint-like maiden. To illustrate the reverent spirit with which I regarded the placid Emily, I may mention that I once asked the silly question of her brother Hugh, if he had ever kissed his sister. "Of course," readily answered he; "I have kissed her many a time." Then, after thinking over the matter, he added, significantly,—"I don't mind telling you, however, that her kissing is rather tame." By this private communication I was more strongly than ever of opinion that this beautiful young virgin was scarcely to be approached by me.

Mr. Ellice's benefice, and also his domicile, lay within the diocese of London. The house was old, and well built, and situated below bridge, upon the left bank of the Thames. Venice could scarcely present a more interesting

and picturesque prospect than that from the windows of the old house. At each change in the skies there is a corresponding change in the aspect of the river, and the constant procession of ships gives a wondrous animation to the scene.

To a mind loving to dwell amidst the memorials of the historic past, the Thames surely affords a very epitome of archæological history. The river owes its name to some pagan adventurers hailing from Rome, some eighteen centuries ago. My bedroom window fronted the Thames. Often on moonlight nights I have sat gazing outward, in abstracted mood, for hours together. With a naturally lively imagination, I have invoked, in my reveries, many a strange vision. I have pictured a ghostly troop of haughty Romans, rowing with measured stroke their towering biremes and triremes along the glittering stream, and bearing in their foremost galley the strange ensign of a crimson tunic hoisted upon a spear. The fascinating vision passes on into the silvery mist; and presently another pageant occupies the silent course. Now the spectral forms appear as stalwart giants, with long flaxen hair; and I recognize them as the Saxon adventurers invited here by the unwary Britons on the exit of the Roman

cohorts. The second processional company passes, like its predecessors, into the shrouding mist, and another set succeeds. Now appears a compact number of stern, haughty-looking men, carrying plates of cold glancing steel upon parts of their rigid frames, bearing in their hands great swords or maces; and I detect in these arrogant warriors the Normans. Again vapour enshrouds the apparition invoked by my active fancy; and now succeed a series of groups, changeful as an April day. First, a gay train, gorgeous in costly stuffs, the figures appearing bent on the "pursuit of pleasure." Then, following close in the wake of the sensualists, appears a small band of austere figures, bending with precise motion to their oars; and amongst them a rigid form, with manacles upon his wrists, sits gazing fixedly upon the looming towers of the English Bastille. Incomprehensible to man is his own life, repeating itself, with the regularity of the seasons, through successive generations.

The rector's house had a flat roof, and upon it the good gentleman had erected a costly telescope, of uncommon power. He was much given to astronomical observations, and in pursuance of his favourite study he used to pass continuous hours of motionless contem-

plation upon the summit of his riverside domicile. These exposed night-watches had frequently caused him severe attacks of cold. His attached spouse, therefore, entertained a strong objection to his star-gazing proclivities. The student had triumphed over the man, however, in this particular, and the devoted astronomer continued, notwithstanding his wife's protestations, to expose himself upon his house roof on almost every night that happened to be clear. As for Mrs. Ellice, I believe she positively hated all the stars of the universe, reserving her keenest aversion for those orbs bearing feminine appellations.

CHAPTER III.

It was winter time when first I took up my quarters in the house of my kind friends, and three weeks passed without any question having been broached, on either side, as to where I should take up a permanent residence. For myself, I had no desire to leave my comfortable home, and, with the spirit of self-indulgence, I allowed the question to remain in abeyance. Mrs. Ellice at length delicately suggested that I should devote my attention to getting myself provided definitely with a home; and I was beginning to act upon her counsel, when the weighty question was settled in a manner altogether unlooked for.

It was a brilliant night when I received an offer which proved to be as a decree of the fates towards my destiny. Mr. Ellice, in the true spirit of a faithful student, had passed two hours of vigil on his observatory. His good spouse, sitting in the company of her children and myself, had now grown fretful at the protracted absence of her astronomically-

zealous lord. Unable to bear her annoyance any longer, she sent a messenger to summon the too-ardent scholar down to tea. When he joined us in the drawing-room, he appeared in a highly excited state, and was altogether unable at the tea-table to comport himself with his usual dignity. The prosaic matron, noticing the nervousness of her husband, presently asked him, somewhat ill-temperedly, if he meant to return that evening to his loved post on the house roof.

"I must go back," he answered, in a quick, preoccupied tone, rising from his chair.

"I suppose," hastily said the lady, "it is your favourite Venus who is tempting you to risk your health, by exposing yourself for hours together upon your house-top, and the wind from the north-east."

"You are mistaken, my dear, as to the object of my present attentions," answered the worthy man, with a faint smile upon his thoughtful features. "It is not Venus. She claims now, no doubt, much interest, in consequence of her near approaching transit across the face of the sun; but I am not her votary to-night."

"There must surely be," remarked Mrs. Ellice, severely, with her brows contracted in

scarcely repressed anger, "something particularly fascinating in the planet Venus, that a number of gentlemen should be willing to leave their wives and families, and follow her to the ends of the earth."

"No doubt," returned the astronomer, placidly, moving to the door. The servant entered at this moment, with the news that a person was below who wished to see her master upon some pressing business. Mr. Ellice was greatly annoyed at this untimely call upon his personal attention, and, on the spur of the moment, bade his servant instruct his visitor to make an appointment for the following morning. The desired arrangement failed, however, to suit the convenience of the visitor, who returned the answer that his business was highly important, and could not be deferred.

The rector was evidently surprised at the sharp message returned him by his strange visitor. He muttered some impatient words, and complained that he should be expected to discuss important business of which he had had no previous information.

"He says, sir, it is about Mr. Amor," timidly remarked the servant.

I was sorry that business concerning myself should interfere with my kind host's

labours of love. I therefore requested him to allow me to take the conduct of the business in question entirely upon my own shoulders.

"No!" cried Mrs. Ellice, addressing her vacillating consort, and rising from her chair. "Certainly not." The good man, thus admonished, heaved a deep sigh of resignation, and passed silently out of the room. The worldly prudent matron now administered to me a stinging rebuke for my offer to the breadwinner.

"If Mr. Ellice had gone out again upon the roof, and caught cold," said she, emphatically, "I should have blamed you for it."

I felt the situation to be in the highest degree unpleasant, and it was a positive relief to me when I was summoned downstairs.

Entering the study, I found the rector sitting opposite to a man of remarkable aspect. The stranger was naturally short, but looked a dwarf, in consequence of having a humped-back. His head being kept low by this spinal deformity, necessitated his looking upwards while he was engaged in conversation. The sharp angular curve of his thin lips bore a striking resemblance to a hawk's beak. His bushy eyebrows were thick with bristling hair, which interlaced in an unsightly manner across the bridge of his ugly nose. His arms, long as

those of an ape, were apparently very muscular, while his hands looked as though capable of terrific grasping power, and were almost brown on their backs from the abundant hair upon them. I noted all these repulsive particulars at a glance, and became unpleasantly impressed by the general appearance and expression of the creature. He looked at me searchingly on my entrance; and as I met his inquisitive eyes I knew instinctively that his was no common observation.

"The young gentleman himself, I presume," said he, rising from his seat, and making a bow in an uncouth fashion. When he had resumed his chair, I noticed that he had a curious, disagreeable habit of expanding his nostrils at each respiration. This action on the monster's part, together with an abnormal show of white in his upturned eyes, produced a very unpleasant effect upon me.

I am certain he recognized my feeling towards him, for while he was engaged speaking to Mr. Ellice, he glanced several times furtively at me, and occasionally a distorted smile stole over his forbidding features. I soon ascertained that he had been commissioned by my sole surviving uncle to request me to take up my abode with him. Now this offer from

my relative was very startling to me. I never remembered his visiting at my late parents' house; and I had often heard him spoken of as an utterly selfish individual, who was possessed of great wealth, which he enjoyed in the dog-in-the-manger fashion.

"It appears you have not met your uncle?" said Mr. Ellice, observing my astonishment at the unexpected proposal.

"He is almost a perfect stranger to me."

"That is not as it should be," said the rector, gravely. "I am glad now to think that proper relations will be established between you. I must, however, express my regret that Mr. Gall has not come here in person to make his important offer, instead of commissioning a servant to make it."

"Mr. Gall is an invalid, sir," explained the emissary. "He entrusts me with the care of all his business."

"Oh, your master is an invalid," said Mr. Ellice, with considerate voice. "Still," continued he, after a thoughtful pause, holding my uncle's note between his two fingers, and shaking it somewhat impatiently, "the tone of Mr. Gall's missive is so exceedingly cold, that I can scarcely think he has his heart in the proposal he makes."

"If you knew Mr. Gall," said the servant, with a disagreeable smile, "you would not judge him by the words he uses."

"What position do you hold in his household?"

"I am—well, his factotum, sir," answered the man, with a quick glance at me.

"Oh, indeed," ejaculated Mr. Ellice, drily.

"Why is it, can you tell me," said I, with sudden indignation, to this highly trusted servant, "that my uncle remembers me now, and did not do so at the time of my father's death?"

"You speak, young gentleman, as though you believe that I am your uncle himself," said the factotum.

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed I, with scorn.

"Shame upon you, Frank!" said the rector, elevating his hand in a deprecatory manner. "You are sadly neglecting your Christian duty."

"It is difficult, sir," I pleaded, "to observe calmness under such circumstances."

"Difficult or not, a proper behaviour must be sustained," said my good friend, commandingly. "The question before us now is one which requires to be calmly deliberated. Let us have no idle taunts, Frank, my lad. Remem-

ber the words of Solomon, 'He that refraineth his lips is wise.'"

I immediately expressed my regret at my ebullition of temper, for I well knew that Mr. Ellice reproved only where there was ample occasion.

"Permit me, sir," said the emissary, "to remark, that Mr. Amor is fortunate in his preceptor."

"Let us proceed," said the rector, a little impatiently. "If I remember aright, you stated that Mr. Gall desires his nephew to be with him to-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow."

"Very good."

"Please, sir," said the factotum, rising to depart, "bear in mind that Mr. Gall will see no one before twelve."

"We shall come to him between twelve and one," returned the rector; whereupon my uncle's emissary made a low bow, and passed out of the room, directing an unfriendly glance at me as he closed the door behind him.

"You must alter your feelings, Frank, towards your uncle," said Mr. Ellice, when we were alone. "He is wealthy and unmarried, and may prove of immense service to you."

"I will, sir, of course, follow your advice;

though I fear I shall not be able to agree with my uncle," I replied, ungraciously.

"You must pray for a better heart," enjoined the good man.

"Sir," I pleaded, "I am not undutiful in heart, only my uncle's offer is such a disagreeable surprise."

"Well, well," said he kindly, patting my head, "you must put away prejudice, and go to your uncle, resolving to do your perfect duty by him. Now," he added, with friendly voice, "come with me to the roof; I will put you in the way there of securing instant fame. Thus you may possibly make your bow to your uncle with a crown of laurel encircling your brows."

I was glad to regain my friend's favour, and was convinced he had advised me entirely for my own benefit. Still, as I followed him upstairs, to see after the extraordinary chance of gathering laurels, my feelings were depressed at the thought that I must now discard magnanimous principles, and strive to acquit myself according to the manner of that circle of base worshippers whose idol is the golden calf. Despite our precautions to avoid detection, our stealthy footsteps were overheard by the vigilant lady in the drawing-room, who bounced

out after us, and, just missing us, screamed a promise which struck terror into my soul, and must have chilled my leader to his very marrow.

We reached our goal, both out of breath, and sat down for a few minutes to recover ourselves. The night was brilliant, rendering remote objects distinctly visible. The moon was absent, and the stars alone illumined the great city, the river, and the semi-rural landscape.

"A lovely night!" exclaimed my companion, as though he were looking upon a beautiful woman bedecked with rarest gems.

While we were seated, he pointed out to me the various planetary groups, and I was amused to remark that he spoke of these orbs in the tone habitually used by him when discoursing of his dearest friends. Presently he took his station at his telescope, and directed his eye through it towards the Pleiads. His observation occupied nearly a quarter of an hour. The atmospheric temperature was several degrees below freezing point, yet my companion endured his ordeal with a calmness which surely entitled him to be classed amidst the disciples of Zeno. He ended his observation with the strange exclamation of "Eureka!"

Then he excitedly bade me look through the telescope, and count carefully the number of shining orbs forming the Pleiads. I looked as directed, and deliberately counted six orbs.

"No more?" said the astronomer.

I felt keenly desirous to detect a seventh orb amidst the interesting group, and I looked long, with the hope of success. At last I became almost blind, and then, of course, I resigned my attempt. My ambitious friend was reserved in his communication to me.

"Did you expect, sir," I inquired, "to discover the star which is said to have disappeared at the fall of Troy?"

"I shall tell you all about it some day, I dare say," he replied, covering up his instrument. "Meanwhile, do not breathe a word on the matter to a living soul. And now," concluded he, with a perceptible shudder, "let us go and make our peace with mamma."

CHAPTER IV.

Morning dawned in cheerless guise. A dense fog lay upon the river, and filled the fringing street,—a fog as dismal as that which Milton describes as existing perpetually in certain regions of the nether world. It was oppressive to the eye, and caused a feeling of unutterable discontent: This misery was superadded, in my case, to the depressing consciousness that I was about to enter upon a new course of life antagonistic to my nature. At breakfast, I gathered that my kind friends had been discoursing of my future fate before I had made my appearance.

"You should consider yourself a very fortunate man, Mr. Frank Amor," said Mrs. Ellice, to me, at the moment of my departure with her husband—having already repeated the same words at least ten times over during breakfast. With a heavy heart I followed the rector out of the house.

After a tedious hour of travelling, we arrived at my uncle's domicile, which we found was

one of a connected row facing the river, at Chelsea. We were shown into the dining-room, and were given the intimation that Mr. Gall would not see us for half an hour. Addressing ourselves to the examination of various objects of interest in the room, our attention was presently attracted to some paintings of the Chinese school. Their subjects were extremely disgusting, being illustrative of the various diabolical tortures peculiar to the Serican people. At this moment the hunchback appeared, when Mr. Ellice expressed himself disagreeably surprised to find here a set of pictures suitable only for some museum of horrors.

"They are good as pictures," said the dwarf, grinning like a ghoul; "but they don't tickle one like the reality."

"Have you actually beheld such scenes?" inquired the rector, with a scared look.

The unsightly dwarf grinned an affirmative.

The rector drew back, with a shudder, on hearing this shocking confession; when the monster, with evident pleasure at having inspired antipathy in Mr. Ellice and me, intimated that his master was ready to receive us.

The first sight of my uncle realized the con-

ception I had formed of an alchemist. His face was long and thin, and was totally devoid of beard. His eyes were hidden beneath a green shade, which gave a ghastly hue to his naturally pallid complexion. His nose was straight and sharp. I can scarcely say that he possessed lips, for his mouth was only distinguished by a curved dark line. He was of middle height, and was emaciated to a remarkable degree. He sat upon a cushioned chair hung upon large wheels, with which he could move about the room. His head was covered with a close-fitting black cap, provided with lappets, while his whole figure was enveloped in a thick robe, turned up at the neck.

The room wherein he received us was the library. Books and rolls of curious old papers appeared in every direction upon the walls. Several strong tables were covered with mummies and skeletons of nature's uncouth Fauna.

"I have much gratification in meeting you, Mr. Gall," said Mr. Ellice, affably. "I have brought a companion for you, whom, I am certain, you will find a young gentleman of proper behaviour, and of sound Christian principles."

A sarcastic smile crept over the cadaverous

features of my uncle on hearing the words uttered in my favour, and his gaze rested upon the figure of a Hindoo deity, with three heads, which was standing near him. "This figure," said he, with piping, monotonous voice, laying his hand upon the idol, "emblematizes the 'Trimurti,' or the three great powers; and which are all resolved into 'Aum.' Your creed is only an imitation of that of the Hindoos, to suit weak minds. Now, sir, I mean to make my nephew acquainted with the fountain-head of all religions."

"I am sorry to hear your intention towards your nephew," said Mr. Ellice, with concern. "I cannot think that any benefit will ever accrue to him from his intimacy with an idolatrous religion."

"No faith can exist without idolatry," replied my uncle, with nervous manner. "The question is simply, which has the noblest idols? I claim superiority for that of the Hindoos."

"Your idols cannot be recommended on the score of their appearance," said the rector, surveying the hideous collection upon the tables.

"Look here!" said my relative, snatching up a smooth black stone, shaped like a sugar-loaf. "This is a symbol of the god Siva.

It is called the yoni-lingam, and typifies, the procreative power of nature—"

"Why, I declare," interrupted the rector, "it resembles exactly the sign of the planet Venus."

"That is so," said my uncle, with a curious smile. "And Venus, you know, presides over love, which is the vital principle of development. Now," concluded he, with an air of triumph, "you must perceive you cannot judge of a Hindoo emblem until you have learned its meaning."

Mr. Ellice was now ill at ease, and it was evident that a struggle was taking place within him, whether he ought to leave me with my uncle, or bid me avoid him for ever. "Sir," said he, at length, "I must ask you to allow your nephew to attend divine service at my church every Sunday, and dine with me in the afternoon."

"I have no objections," replied my heterodox relative, with a slight gesture of indifference.

My good friend now rose to depart, and with greater courtesy than honesty, expressed his desire of improving the new acquaintance so auspiciously begun. My uncle did not, however, respond with any cordiality to the wish of the rector; but mumbled something,

which certainly could not be thought to mean an agreeable response to his visitor's compliment.

Without requesting us to take refreshment, he clapped his hands, by way of signal to the Indian servant in attendance, who entered, bearing cakes and wine, immediately upon the summons. Mr. Ellice, with courteous spirit, broke my uncle's bread and ate of it, and took also a little of his wine; and I followed the good gentleman's example. The host touched neither the bread nor the wine; but sat stock-still, absorbed in the contemplation of a grotesque black idol. I felt annoyed at his neglect of hospitable ceremony, and ventured to offer him some refreshment.

"I am not able to eat in an ordinary manner," he replied, coldly, without shifting his gaze from the idol.

"I am concerned, sir," said Mr. Ellice, "to hear that you are suffering in health."

"I am averse to making my health the subject of remark," returned my uncle, nervously, with a sudden dark expression upon his features.

Mr. Ellice now, with evident relief to himself, took his departure; and I proceeded upstairs to take possession of the suite of rooms which had been assigned to my use.

My rooms were sumptuously furnished, the woodwork being of the costliest kind, while the textile fabrics were of silk and fine wool, from Indian and Chinese looms. On the walls were a few pictures, of great merit as to treatment, but base to a degree in design. They were the productions of an artist whom I can only term a gifted coward. He, with the desire of appealing to the unholiest emotions, had basely selected his subjects from the filthiest passages of Pagan mythology. These pictures were positively hateful to me, for I had been taught to think that the man who feels himself called upon for service in the temple of the arts, should regard his work as consecrated to Jehovah. "Surely," had said my worthy teacher, "there is no higher work than that of giving to the world the delightful knowledge that all things are beautiful."

I indignantly tore down the debasing pictures, and threw them in a heap upon the floor. My uncle had apprized me that one of his Indian servants had been told off for my service alone. I wished now to summon him; but was unable to discover a bell-pull in the room. Growing impatient, I stamped my foot upon the floor, and clapped my hands; whereupon the door was opened, and my dusky

retainer appeared upon the threshold, with his head bowed low in respect. I rushed up to this man, and angrily told him never to come in upon me again without my proper summons. He answered respectfully, in very imperfect English, that his duty was to wait always within ready call, and that hand-clapping constituted the only signal of the household. I ordered him to take the pictorial abominations away, and to inform my uncle that I had so ordered.

When my instructions were accomplished, I sat down by the window, to think over my new situation. I felt lonely, and much depressed in spirits, and only for the love I entertained for my dear friend, the rector, did I resolve to bear awhile with my present unpalatable arrangements. I could not help regarding my uncle as an animated enigma; while his satellites, excepting the hideous vizier, seemed to me more like shadows than corporeal beings.

The view from my room window was charming. There was the interesting Thames, with divers light craft skimming upon it up and down; while the side-walks presented a motley irregular train of pedestrians. Dwarf trees, and shrubbery in the spiky leaflessness of winter, composed the background.

I was in the midst of a dull reverie, when my attention was drawn to a beautifully-formed young woman, who had stopped by the river-side just opposite my window. She had evidently just alighted from a steamer, which I had seen passing a few minutes before. To my grateful sight her figure seemed of such perfect order as Phidias might have imagined in his happiest moments. She stood close to the chain suspended at the edge of the embankment, gazing pensively out upon the river. Presently, in an absent manner, she caught up the chain with both hands, and, resting her knee upon it, swung herself gently to and fro. I watched her every movement, and whimsically wondered if my uncle were looking at her also. She continued for some five minutes in her abstracted attitude, when the chain on which she was resting snapped asunder, and she fell violently to the ground. Instantly I quitted my room, and rushed downstairs, running full tilt against the astonished vizier. Pausing not an instant, I flung open the front door, and bounded like a stag over to the side of the maiden. I found her supporting herself with her left hand on a wooden post. It was evident to me, from the oscillating action of her body, together with the fixed stare of her eyes, and retention of her

lower lip between her teeth, that she was labouring under keen bodily anguish. I had only addressed a few commiserating words to her, when she sank down in a swoon. I lifted her from the ground, and carried her promptly into my uncle's house. The vizier stood in the passage, and, without speaking, opened the door of the dining-room, that I might pass into that room with my senseless charge. I refused to take the interesting patient into the chamber of horrors, and straightway made for the library. Pushing the door open violently, I dashed into my uncle's sanctum, coming in rude collision with my relative, who was pacing the floor near the entrance with a phial of medicine in his hand. I explained to him hurriedly that the senseless girl I had so abruptly brought in here had met with an accident, and must be attended to instantly; and then I requested him to give me some sal-volatile, and a basin of water. He, poor man, was utterly speechless at this outrage on his privacy. There was no need for him to call for the attendance of his servants, for several of them were already standing at the doorway, willing, I dare say, to put me to death at their suzerain's order. He looked with blank amazement on seeing me

deposit my tender charge upon his wheel-chair, and presently cried out, with querulous voice, that he would not allow his "penetralia" to be used as a surgery; whereupon I lost my patience altogether, and rated him in a manner which added considerably to his astonishment.

"You have, then, no thought of me?" whined my self-caring relative.

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, indignantly. "Is it possible that a man should so far forget his duty as to neglect a swooning girl to attend to his own wants!"

At this moment the factotum brought me, unexpectedly, the desired restoratives. Then I closed the door against idle intruders; and shortly had the inexpressible satisfaction of beholding my patient revive under the treatment administered to her. I took advantage of my opportunity to scrutinize the features of my interesting charge, and was filled with lively admiration at her manifold charms. Her face was surpassingly beautiful, and her figure was perfection itself. There was a certain look of imperiousness dwelling in her countenance, which, to a considerable extent, awed my admiration. Her forehead was low and wide. Her eyes were of that azure tint which has so often enraptured the masculine

heart; and they were fringed with long lashes which manifestly fulfilled no unimportant part in the play of expression. Her nose was straight, and bore an air of decision in its Attic contour. Her upper lip presented that enchanting form which is known by name of "Cupid's bow"; and her lower lip pouted slightly in a most delicious manner. Upon her softly-rounded chin was a bewitching dimple, which served to greatly modify the haughty expression observable in her general features. Her hands were gloved, but were evidently very delicate in form. Her feet were small, and high of instep. She wore a dress of black silk, and a jacket of sealskin; and while her general costume was one having considerable claims to richness, it looked almost humble contrasted as it was by loose masses of the wearer's sun-hued hair. I had loosened the top of her dress, and was enraptured to behold the exquisite symmetry of her throat, the beauty of which was enhanced by a fringe of snow-white lace.

My uncle had now partly recovered from his surprise, and came creeping forward, curious to look upon the innocent cause of his discomposure. As the living charms met his gaze, he even retired a step or two in overwhelming amazement. Now this man, by reason of his

studies in Sanscrit and cognate lore, surely had frequent incitement to imagine scenes wherein lovely woman took first place, and, by such practice, must have been prepared to contemplate without unusual wonder a living counterpart to his ideals; but this one evidently exceeded in loveliness all he had ever imagined. "The goddess *Lakshmi* is not fairer than this mortal," muttered he, with mind perverted by the constant study of pagan mythologies. "Be ye careful in your services towards her," he said presently to me, with almost reverent voice.

On my asking leave of the fair patient to make an examination of her knee, she blushed deeply, and stammered her refusal; and I was unable to overcome her objection, even though I assured her that my experience as a medical student was sufficient to warrant me undertaking the immediate care of her injury. The conduct of my fair patient was actuated undoubtedly by a true feeling of modesty, and was remarkable when coupled with the knowledge I afterwards gained, that she was an actress in a West-end theatre, and had for some time appeared nightly in a burlesque, playing a part which necessitated her wearing a closely-fitting costume. She presently ex-

pressed her anxious desire that her professional manager should be informed of her accident; and, thereupon, my uncle despatched an Indian with her message.

The recluse forgot his own ailments, and became for the nonce an active man in his wondrous interest towards this beautiful girl, who had been brought so strangely under his notice. He offered her fruit which had been intended for his own delectation; and finally deprived himself of his usual airing, by devoting his carriage to the use of the maimed siren. In answer to his respectful inquiry, she stated her name to be Eve Melrose;—and then the admiring old man, addressing her by her name, requested her to honour his house by another visit, promising to show her his museum of curiosities, among which, he said, she would no doubt find much that would be interesting to her.

It surprised me to find this reserved man so affected with natural feeling as to invite the acquaintanceship of a young woman of whom he knew nothing more than that she was beautiful. She attempted to rise, but immediately fell back again, with a moan of pain. I observed that when she did so my uncle shuddered, as though he participated in her anguish.

An empress could not have been more honoured than was this fair disciple of Thespis at her departure. Every servant in the house waited upon her. Two of them bore her on a chair into my uncle's carriage, and each one of the rest lent some assistance in the matter; while the master himself superintended the various arrangements. The young beauty appeared not in the least flurried by these attentions, but received them as if she had a perfect right to them. When she was comfortably settled in the vehicle, she nodded her thanks to my uncle, and immediately turned her eyes with a frown towards the place where she had sustained her accident. With swelling heart, I took the seat opposite her in the carriage, and proceeded with her to her own house. We stopped at a cottage in Antonia Place, when, in obedience to the request of my fair companion, I went alone to her domicile, in order to break the news of her accident to her mother. I knocked twice ere I received any answer, and was then suddenly confronted by a middle-aged, sharp-featured little woman, who announced herself to be Mrs. Melrose. I proceeded nervously to explain to her my delicate message, and had no sooner mentioned the fact of her daughter having sustained a

severe hurt to her knee, than she vented a series of expletives, in a curious jargon, half French and half English, and then ran to the side of the carriage to condole with her girl. I assisted to bear the maiden into the cottage, and then took my leave, receiving permission to call on the following day.

As I was journeying back to my uncle's house, I felt elated with the thought that I was now acquainted with a pretty actress. I never before had seen an actress away from the stage, and this first experience of the kind fully bore out my preconceived idea, that they were, one and all, possessed of the rarest attractions.

Immediately on reaching my new home, I was informed by the steward that my uncle was so unnerved by the recent events as to require complete seclusion for the remainder of the day. A note was, at the same time, given me from my uncle, informing me that he preferred to dine alone, and that I should, therefore, always be at liberty to choose my own time for dinner, and should also be free to order whatever was most agreeable to myself. This arrangement was very satisfactory to me, for I had been dreading the idea of dining with my saturnine relative. In the first flush

of my self-congratulation, I ordered that my dinner for the day should be got ready as soon as it was possible.

I was full of my new acquaintance with the actress, and felt anxious to speak of it to some one familiar to me. I determined therefore to pay a visit to the Ellice family in the course of the evening, altogether overlooking the likelihood that the chosen recipients of my wonderful story would not be pleased at it.

In due course I visited my good friends the Ellices, and imparted to them my burning intelligence. The worthy heads of this family immediately expressed it as their opinion that the facts, as related by me, were certainly not calculated to benefit either my uncle or myself in the estimation of respectable society. "Your care of the injured girl was proper enough," said Mrs. Ellice, "but your invitation to her, to visit you at her own discretion, was reprehensible in the highest degree. As for your uncle," she added, seriously, "I believe he is mad, and acts without knowing right from wrong. But I cannot excuse you, Frank, for disregarding so soon the precepts of your good advisers. I would strongly recommend you to dismiss, now and for ever, all idea

of continuing your acquaintanceship with this acting person."

"I dare say she will never come near us again," said I, generally in extenuation.

Mr. Ellice advised me not to accept my uncle as a guide in questions of religion or ethics, but firmly to continue in the principles in which I had been instructed. Thanking them both for their hearty counsel, I bade them adieu, and took my leave, repentant and humbled.

Hugh, who accompanied me for some distance on my way home, was boyishly eager for the particulars of my little adventure. Prompted by my excited imagination, I described my siren as the embodiment of every grace of the highest order possible in a human being; and, warming with my subject, I spoke of the fair young actress as though she were almost divine. My companion was greatly excited by my glowing description, and expressed his desire to be introduced to the interesting fair one. The thought then occurred to me that I was acting sadly in opposition to the advice recently given me, and thereupon I abstained from further remark on my engrossing subject. I had determined to take a boat to Chelsea; so, on parting with

Hugh, I went down to the river, and engaged a waterman to row me home.

As I was proceeding gently homeward, I lay back gazing at the stars, and was thus reminded of the episode which had taken place the previous evening on the rector's house roof. Presently, I exulted to think that, in an idle moment, I had discovered a brighter star on earth than any which my good friend had called my attention to in the heavens.

When I arrived at Chelsea, an irresistible longing took possession of me to behold again the shrine of my divinity ere I retired to rest. With strangely infatuated mind, I went out of my way in order to gaze upon a mean little brick house, wrapt in the shadows of night. Perfect silence reigned around, and no light was visible in the tenement, saving the deceptive glitter upon the window glass from the stars. I felt the influence of the poetic situation, and, thus affected, I leaned against the railing parapet, and gave way to rapturous thought. Suddenly I was grasped at my coat collar by a rude hand, and, on wheeling round, I found myself in the custody of a policeman.

"What's your little game—eh?" said the prosaic disturber of my idle reverie. "You

must come along with me, and give an account of yourself."

I ducked my head under his arm, and, by a sudden wrench, freed myself from his grip. "Come along!" I shouted, making off at the top of my speed.

"Stop thief!" cried the policeman, when, after chasing me a short distance, he perceived that he could not overtake me. I stopped instantly at his insult, and waited for him.

"How dare you address such language towards me!" I demanded indignantly of my ungenerous pursuer, as he came up almost spent of breath.

"Cos," said he, with panting voice, "I think you ain't no good."

"Idiot!" I exclaimed, pushing him forcibly backward, as he attempted to lay hold of me. Thereupon he drew his *bâton*, and sternly bade me surrender myself his prisoner.

"My home is close at hand," said I, perceiving the grave nature of my situation. "Come with me there." He looked for a few moments suspiciously at me, and then nodded in token of his consent to my proposal.

We arrived shortly at our destination, and passed together into the front garden by the aid of my key. I disdained to try bribery for

escape from my dilemma. Without addressing a single word to my unwelcome companion, I knocked at the house door. Some few seconds elapsed, and, as no answer was made, I knocked again, in a decidedly vigorous manner. Then almost immediately the door was opened by an Indian, who, upon recognizing me, salaamed as usual.

"Who knocks so loud?" said Stoat, coming out of the library.

"I, to assert my respectability," I answered, mockingly.

"What is the matter, sir?"

"My officious companion will inform you."

The officer then proceeded to explain the circumstances which had caused him to accompany me here. "Orders," concluded he authoritatively, "'ave lately been give out from head-quarters to night constables, respectin' loiterers in byways."

"I was certainly a loiterer," said I, with affected concern. Then I turned upon my heel, and went up to my own room, leaving Stoat and the guardian of the peace to settle my case between them.

After a little reflection, I concluded it was advisable for me to seek an immediate interview with my uncle, in order to apologize

for the annoyance I had so early caused him. I clapped my hands, without leaving my room, when the door was instantly opened, and my dusky attendant appeared, in a submissive attitude, waiting for my command.

"Go, and ask my uncle if I may speak with him," said I, feeling somewhat disturbed at the strange manner of my servant. He did not go, but bowed his head almost to the ground, touching his brow with three fingers of his right hand. "What is your name?" I inquired, abruptly.

"Chund, Masser Saheb," answered he, in a sing-song tone.

"Well, make haste, Chund, with my order."

"Serang Stoat come to young Masser Saheb. Masser Saheb Gall say, no come to him."

I determined to see my uncle personally, so I bade the Indian remain at his post until I dismissed him. Without further ceremony, I proceeded downstairs to the library.

As soon as I entered this room, I was conscious of a strange, sickly odour prevading it. My uncle was sitting in his easy chair, and appeared asleep. I crept up to him, and was startled to observe that his features were more than usually ghastly. He looked so exceedingly cadaverous that, though somewhat familiarized

to hideous sights, I was shocked to look upon him. No sign of respiration could I perceive in him, but I was assured that he was still alive from the fact that his thread-like mouth moved with a curious smile. I bent over him, and looked into his eyes, which were open to a remarkable degree, and were staring, with a vacant expression like that of a fish.

With sudden apprehension, I glanced at the adjacent table, and, noticing upon it an oddly formed china bowl, with a long tube attached, the terrible knowledge occurred to me that my uncle was addicted to the smoking of opium, and was now under its deadly influence. It was, indeed, saddening to me, looking at this slave of a potent drug, to reflect that he had been striving for many weary years to acquire knowledge; and now, largely possessed as he was in abstruse lore, and grown old, was yet willing to barter away his very soul for occasional spasms of delirious enjoyment. I was about to call for some assistance in this pitiful matter, when my attention was arrested by a note-book, which was lying open on the same table whereon was the accursed pipe. I was tempted to inspect the exposed pages of this book, and found they contained a complete manuscript translation in English of some sacred

Indian composition, headed with the single word, "Lakshmi." I read these lines:—"She shines like a continued blaze of lightning, her lovely form reclining on resplendent water-lilies with a thousand petals. She diffuses throughout heaven the fragrance of the lotus-flower." Here a sudden agitating recollection struck upon my mind, causing me to desist reading further. "Lakshmi" was the name, I remembered, that my uncle had bestowed upon our fascinating charge. It was evident to me that her splendid power, while compelling my own deep homage, had also asserted itself over the unhappy man who was lying now in a self-inflicted trance. It was also apparent to me that my wretched uncle had filled his imagination with sensuous imagery, while he inhaled the fumes of the devilish narcotic; thus preparing his soul to revel for a few hours in a state of spurious delight.

On second thought, I concluded to allow the unhappy man to awake naturally from his stupor; so I retired quietly to my own room, and sat musing by the fire. I believe I was affected by breathing the polluted air of the library, for I shortly fell asleep in my chair. I dreamt that I wandered in a paradise, resembling a pictorial scene entitled "The

Plains of Heaven," which I had once beheld, and felt interested in. This picture was of a very artificial style of treatment, and outrageously extravagant in its sentiment, but it had, to my inexperienced eye, a peculiar attraction. I imagined that I encountered the beautiful young actress in my paradise, when she, yielding to my request, accompanied me in an idle ramble. We passed together through groves all brave with foliage, unnaturally gay and fresh-looking; and while our eyes were delighted with the sights around us, our ears were charmed with the piping of birds, and the murmur of falling waters. Suddenly I found myself transported to a solitude of ice and snow, and was bewailing my changed sad condition, when I awoke, feeling stiff and benumbed. My room was now cold and in darkness, for the fire had burned out, and the lamp was extinguished.

Wearily I stepped to the window, and looked out at the night, which was faintly illumined by starlight. The opposite bridge, spanning the dark river, loomed dismally in my anxious sight, while the objects beyond appeared as chaotic black masses. At this solemn time I was conscious of an impression that I was on the eve of a momentous crisis of my fate, and,

with a strange impulse, I repeated aloud to myself the prophetic words,—"We know not what a day may bring forth."

Happening presently to look straight downward, I beheld a patch of light lying upon the part of the garden facing the library. This caused me to remember with a shudder, that while I was now keeping vigil, my new patron was likely still sunk in a weird unconsciousness, and that both our unnatural conditions were attributable to the same cause. Then the thought crossed my mind that the Circe of the double-acting spell was now, in all likelihood, herself awake and in pain. My spirit was tormented, and as I at length laid me down to rest, I felt that I had been suddenly disassociated from the tranquil past, and was embarked upon an ominous future.

CHAPTER V.

The morning was somewhat advanced when I awoke, with a feeling of restored vigour. After breakfast, I sent a message to my uncle, requesting him to give me an interview, and getting his ânswer, that he should see me in an hour, I employed the interval in calling to inquire after Miss Melrose. I was informed by the mother that her girl had passed a very restless night, in consequence of severe inflammation having set in, causing her much pain.

Mrs. Melrose was a short, spare woman, with sharp, well-formed features. She was of French nationality, and bore all the characteristics of her race, possessing vivacity of manner, and a vast amount of self-importance. Albeit she had remarkably fine eyes and teeth, and a well-proportioned figure, she was by no means prepossessing, for her complexion was extremely sallow, and as wrinkled as a walnut. While she sat with me now, she favoured me with a sketch of nearly her entire history, informing me that she was of very honourable parentage, *mais*

pauvre; that she had married an English gentleman, *sans fortune;* that, being obliged on her husband's death to shift for herself, she had brought up Eve, her only child, as a *comédienne;* and that she herself was now filling the post of *maîtresse des robes* at the same theatre. I observed with pleasure that she was keenly jealous of her daughter's honour. My discovery of this feeling was made when I had expressed a casual remark with regard to some important military operations taking place at the time on the Continent. Suddenly a menacing expression appeared in her vixenish countenance, and she proceeded abruptly to inquire if I were a soldier.

"Quite the reverse, madam," I answered pleasantly.

"You shall be very reverse before you be good," remarked she, energetically shaking her head. "My opinion is so."

"Why do you think so, madam?"

"Attendez-vous!" she answered, vehemently, advancing her face uncomfortably near to mine. "Officers of ze guard insult often ma chère fille; so I hate zem. Mon Eve," she continued, with increased fervour, "she is a woman that has beauty et vertu. She shall go to somm goot man, zat has riches, to

be wife to him. But to be a joujou—nevare!"

"I beg, madam, to assure you," I hastened to say, "that I entertain the strictest views of morality."

"Zat is well for you," she said, relaxing her fingers, which had, in their contracted state, appeared like talons. I thought it was well for the charming Eve that she had such a formidable protectress. At the same time, the idea of a mother-in-law of this kind was not at all pleasant to my mind. I detected evidences of poverty in Mrs. Melrose's house; and I took the liberty of remarking to the mistress that her daughter's illness would, no doubt, militate against their prosperity. She did not reply with words; but shrugged her shoulders, making a grimace of resignation. I scarcely knew what course to take in regard to the matter. I felt inclined to offer her assistance, and made some delicate advances to that effect; but no encouragement was returned me, and, therefore, I was obliged to check my benevolent promptings. I was glad to take leave of Mrs. Melrose; yet, strange to say, I was still more glad to get her leave for me to call again. I saw my uncle immediately on my return home, and informed him of my visit to Mrs. Melrose.

Having related the conversation which had taken place at my visit, I was proceeding with a cursory description of the apparently impoverished circumstances of the Melrose family, when I was positively frightened to notice that my listener's complexion had grown almost pale-green.

"Are you unwell?" I inquired, anxiously.

"This poverty is beyond my comprehension," he said, heedless of my inquiry. "It must surely be for some great purpose."

"I intend to send some fruit to poor Mrs. Melrose, for her daughter," I said, looking inquisitively at my strange companion.

"It is quite in accordance with the ordinances of the ancient religion," remarked he, glancing at his idols, "to present offerings to the members of its Pantheon."

"Oh, uncle!" said I, with a laugh, "can you really suppose me foolish enough to consider the lady of my attentions more than mortal?"

"Your question ought to be considered in a higher spirit than that in which you have put it," he answered, turning away his eyes from the light. "God is manifested by expression of the primitive powers, so He appears constantly in innumerable forms; confine Him to

one form, and you nullify His omnipresence. For myself," he added, with assured low voice, "I am quite prepared to acknowledge an avatar of Aum in the beautiful creature who recently honoured this house."

"But it is surely impossible," said I, confused, "to suppose a God appearing in the form of a woman."

"The great spirit is of no particular species or gender," responded my erudite companion. "The Hindoos, with perceptive powers far higher than that of the general European races, do not attempt to restrict spiritual nature to mortal conditions. It is written in the Yajur-veda that the almighty Bramâ is masculo-feminine in nature. Now, that tenet," added he, significantly, "I myself entertain."

I felt strangely affected by the thoughts excited within me by my uncle's words. I had never before carried my mental speculation so high as I did now; yet, though a foreboding oppressed me, I thirsted to obtain some knowledge of the mysteries of creation. "I should be grateful to you, uncle, if you would give me the benefit of your information," I remarked, in a spirit akin to that which made man in the beginning yearn to be a god.

"That, I cannot promise you," he replied,

thoughtfully; "I am necessitated by physical weakness to observe mostly a state of seclusion. Yet I am willing," he added, with a friendly nod, "to take you with me to-day for a drive."

I had intended to attend college that day; but now readily agreed to accompany my uncle. We drove to Richmond, and were fortunate in having a fine day. It grieved me to find my relation's debility was so great that he could not sit upright while travelling; but had to repose upon a mattress laid upon a movable frame, occupying nearly half of the entire accommodation of the carriage. When we arrived at Kew, I tried to arouse him to admire the charming prospect around us, but he only responded with a pitiful shake of his head.

"England is a mere desert compared with India," he remarked, languidly. "I will give you a slight description of a landscape of Cashmere, in order that you may know what constitutes a charming prospect. Imagine a valley clothed with emerald verdure, interspersed with flowering plants, at once ravishing to the eye and the olfactory nerves. There are several lakes set in its midst, glittering like precious stones; while the background is

occupied by luxuriantly clothed hills, flanked by the towering peaks of the Himâlayas."

"The view you are now looking at is surely excellent of its kind," I remarked, noticing that my captious companion's eyes were directed to the floral display visible through the garden entrance.

"It is like a bad copy of a Turkey carpet," replied he, with a contemptuous gesture. "I must tell you when one has once beheld the flora of India, one cannot afterwards admire the stinted flower expression of northern Europe. You have no such flowers here as the Koonja—a rose of peerless aspect and fragrance; the Nusreen, which possesses every high property possible to a flower; or the Champaca, a species of jasmine, with which the Hindoo girls adorn their tresses and perfume their garments."

I felt offended at him for his unamiable remark upon the scene presented by the botanical garden, and did not speak to him again until we arrived at Richmond, when I proposed we should go on to the famous Bellevue Hotel, and take luncheon there. He agreed to my proposal; so we drove up to the hotel, and proceeded into the coffee-room.

My chilly relative immediately sat down at

the fire, while I went to the window, to enjoy the noble view of wooded country, intersected by the beautiful Thames. It was indeed a cheerful day for winter-time. The trees, though leafless, were very beautiful, their branches and twigs being coated over with a white frost. The ground was also whitened, from the same cause, while the river mirrored the azure of the sky. With hopeful feeling, I asked my uncle to come over to me, and be converted into an admirer of English landscape; but he refused to leave his warm position, and bade me not trouble him in the matter. I now felt convinced that he was a most unsuitable companion for me, and I longed for some other.

Besides my uncle and myself, there was only one other occupant of the room. This was a young gentleman, who rested with his arms upon a table, and his head upon his arms. He was asleep, and had evidently been drinking intemperately, for a decanter containing brandy, two empty soda-water bottles, and a tumbler lay on a salver close by him. He was a well-formed man, and was fashionably dressed. His face was concealed for the most part, but the fine contour of his head and neck afforded evidence enough to prove him a man of high

kind. His hair was tawny, like that of a lion, and was of curly growth. The tips of his fingers, peeping out from beneath his forehead, were delicate as those of a lady. This slumbering Antinous was accompanied by a large unkempt dog, which lay restlessly at his feet. While I was gazing upon him, he stretched out his long limbs, and rudely touched his couchant brute companion, causing it to start to its feet. The animal's nervous action awakened the man, when he unfeelingly administered a vigorous kick to the unwitting cause of his disturbance.

Now, to my great joy, I recognized him as a young barrister, who was known familiarly by the name of "Dick Alcibiades," which appellation had been given him because of his handsome figure and his utterly reckless conduct.

Richard Spinner was the only son of a deceased Indian merchant, and had inherited a splendid fortune. He was gifted with a rare capacity of intellect; but was also cursed with ungovernable passions. "Hilloa, my virtuous friend! You here!" he exclaimed, on recognizing me. "Is it possible, old fellow!"

At this remark my uncle looked round, thinking, no doubt, that it was addressed to himself; but on perceiving that I was the "old

fellow" spoken to, he resumed his attentive study of the live coal.

"Certainly, I am here!" I responded, with a laugh.

"This event will surely necessitate a consultation with the augurs," cried my reckless friend, with affected concern. "Only some extraordinary provocation could have made the earnest Amor forsake the temple of Esculapius for a whole day."

"Hush!" I exclaimed, pointing to my uncle, who sát crouching over the fire, muffled up as he had been in the open air.

"Oh, you are here upon a funeral errand!" cried my careless companion, in a loud voice; "I suppose that's one of the frozen mutes, endeavouring to thaw himself."

"My uncle!" I uttered, with suppressed voice of warning.

"Pray forgive me!" said Spinner. "But he comes in such a questionable shape."

"What are you doing here yourself?" I inquired, with the intention of changing the topic of conversation.

"I am here by some occult design of Providence. It may be to meet you."

I shrewdly suspected that this unregulated being was here for no particular purpose what-

ever; but that he was, vulgarly speaking, out on the spree. My suspicions were confirmed, when, after some badinage on his part towards me, he proceeded to relate that, on the day previous, he had been at Hammersmith, and had there made the acquaintance of his canine follower.

"He is a remarkably ugly dog," I remarked, surveying the animal in question with feelings almost of disgust.

"When first I saw him," cried Spinner, with a sarcastic laugh, "I thought he was Cerberus, for he seemed to have a multiplicity of heads."

"What are you going to do with him?"

"As to that," explained my dissolute friend, confidentially, "I am already in treaty with a fellow keeping a caravan show of wild beasts, to buy from him a mangy hyena, in order to pit it against the cur."

I was much shocked at the depravity of mind to which this naturally gifted man had arrived; and I hastened to remind him that not only was his scheme unlawful, but also at variance with every principle of morality.

"Don't preach, like a good fellow," he replied, impatiently. "The fight is bound to come off, and you must come and see it."

"Your propositions grow lower as they succeed, Mr. Spinner."

"Oh, amiable Amor!" he said, with impressive air; "pray remember that the inclinations of man are as varied as his capabilities. I am, unlike you, a naughty man, and cannot possibly love life without any naughtiness."

"Every one should strive to live in accordance with the canons of virtue."

"Methinks I have heard that dictum before."

"You will very likely hear it again."

"The probability is, indeed, very strong as to that, I should think," said the graceless one, pouring some brandy from the decanter into a tumbler for himself. "But how, tell me, are we to decide which are the true moral laws, when men are so divided in opinion as to what should constitute the golden rule of life?"

"Your own conscience is sufficient guide for your right conduct."

"I suppose that conscience existed in Mahomet and Ignatius Loyola, and yet it did not incite either to action of a gentle or—or dutiful kind."

I remembered that my spirit, only an hour ago, had been sorely dismayed by my uncle's bold enunciations; and I felt now still further

troubled to hear my younger friend declaring his conviction that the moral laws were essentially of an arbitrary nature. "By what process of reasoning," I inquired, anxiously, "are you able to convince yourself that morality may exist in a system calculated to allow its disciples gratifying their selfishness?"

Spinner returned me no answer, but devoted his attention wholly upon his dog. With lively apprehension I observed that the action of the animal was exceedingly eccentric. It was standing upright in a rigid manner, gazing wildly straight in front; and was making short snaps now and then at the air, while maintaining a strange whine of pain.

"What is the matter with the brute?" I inquired of my watchful companion.

"Incipient rabies, I believe," he answered, with perfect composure. Then, walking up to the afflicted cur, he seized it firmly by each side of its neck. "Out with your knife, Amor, and cut his throat! Look sharp, my boy, and take care of my hands."

I acted promptly on his instructions, and the next minute I had the satisfaction of beholding the poor animal stretched dead upon the floor.

"Now open the window," said Spinner, in unimpaired self-possession. I promptly obeyed;

when he pitched the carcase out into the garden, and, without another word, went away to cleanse his hands.

My uncle had retreated, in dire alarm, at the outset of this affair; and now, on being assured that there was no further cause for terror, he returned to the room. He was much affected by the alarming event, and desired to return home without further delay. I firmly objected to go until we had had luncheon; and furthermore urged on my uncle the propriety of inviting Spinner to join us in our repast. The unsocial old man was very unwilling to accede to my wishes, but ultimately gave in to me. Spinner readily accepted our invitation, and we at once sat down together at the table. My uncle was, I remarked, ill at ease with the loud-voiced, reckless young barrister, and seemed almost suspicious of him.

"You may have known my father in India, Mr. Gall?" presently said Spinner, looking through his wine-glass with critical air.

"I once knew a Mr. Spinner, who was an opium merchant in the province of Bahar," returned my uncle, deliberately.

"The very man."

"Oh, indeed!" said my uncle; "How very remarkable!"

"I was born at Patna, of the same province," explained Spinner, carelessly. "And there I remained until I was in my tenth year, when my father took flight to the Elysian fields, and I was deported to this rugged Norland."

"Rugged you may well call it," remarked my uncle, with a sneer.

"Yet not in any spirit of depreciation," quickly responded Spinner. "For, by the gods! the Norland is the nursery of heroes."

"I cannot go with you so far," said the old man.

"So much the worse for yourself," cried Spinner, with a pitiful laugh. "Now, I would ask you what reasonable thing do you desire that you cannot obtain here?"

"Heat, for one thing."

"Heat is coming down now wholesale upon the land," said Spinner, pleasantly, pointing to the window, through which was seen a heavy fall of snow.

"Snow is insufferable to me," said my uncle, with a shudder. "My conception of hell is a region cursed with perpetual ice and snow."

"Oh, give me the stern Norland for my home!" cried Spinner, enthusiastically. "Sunny lands are not at all to my liking. Once, I remember I looked down from the Acropolis of

Athens upon the heaven-hued Attic gulf, studded with jewel-like islets, and its sunlit shores clothed with olive-groves and luxuriant fig-trees; and while I acknowledged the scene as indeed one of the most charming description, I was conscious that my soul could be more deeply stirred by the contemplation of a wild, snow-covered landscape of Albion. But you do not eat, good sir," he added, looking inquiringly at my abstemious relative. "No wonder that you cannot abide the cold."

"Much food does not suit my constitution," returned my uncle, impatiently.

"Perish that thought!" exclaimed Spinner. "Eat and drink heartily, say I, and chance the result."

"My recollection of Asia," said my uncle, without other notice of Spinner's unwelcome expression than a resentful gesture, "prevents me from finding any admiration for this bleak, mist-shrouded island. Now everything here appears to me altogether unattractive."

"The women surely are attractive enough for you," pleaded Spinner, with a sly wink at me.

"Oh, no!" growled the discontented old man. "I have seen only one alluring woman during the three recent years of my residence in this hateful country."

"May I inquire who is that distinguished fair one?"

"My nephew will inform you."

"She is an actress, named Melrose," said I, promptly.

"Melrose!" repeated Spinner, with reflective air. "Do you know her professional name?"

"No."

"Do you know what theatre she is engaged at?"

I mentioned the name of the theatre.

"Does she reside in Chelsea?"

"Yes, with her mother, a Frenchwoman."

"Oho! Now I know your paragon," cried Spinner, with lively animation. "She is, no doubt, a remarkably beautiful young person, and she is also, I am glad to tell you, virtuous. Let me warn you not to seek after her, for she is watched over with a Gorgon-like care."

"She has no father," I said.

"She hath an equivalent in her uncle," responded Spinner, with cautionary emphasis. "He is not one to be trifled with, I can confidently affirm."

My uncle took no part in the conversation regarding the young actress, but he betrayed by his expression that he was keenly interested in it.

The snow-fall ceased shortly, and the sun broke forth with a brilliant radiance, causing the earth to appear, generally, with a complexion like that of a blushing maiden. My uncle thereupon rose to return home, when Spinner, with a wicked pleasantry, asked him if he would accept the tail of the slain dog as a souvenir of the occasion.

"My desire," returned my ungenial relative, coldly, "is rather to forget the events of this day altogether."

"Oh, we shall meet again," said the bantering young man, confidently.

"Not if I can help it," muttered my uncle to himself, in an undertone, as he passed me on his way out.

Spinner accompanied us to the carriage, and, while taking his leave, arbitrarily intimated his intention to call upon us at Chelsea at some early date.

Shortly after we moved off, my companion took something from his vest-pocket, and conveyed it covertly to his mouth. I suspected it was a piece of opium. He lay almost motionless during our journey, and never spoke a word. I addressed him several times, but he obstinately refused to return me any answer whatever. When we arrived home, I felt as

though relieved from a dreadful mental incubus, and went gladly upstairs to my own room. I saw no more of my uncle that day, for he kept himself strictly secluded in the library.

When at length I went to bed, I lay awake for a long time, thinking over my recent extraordinary experiences, and while I was fearing I should never again know peace, I fell, happily, sound asleep.

I was delighted with the ensuing morning. Frost was in the air, and the snow-fall of the previous day scintillated in the clear sunlight. A rare northern breeze contended against the tide of the river, causing angry wavelets to rise on the face of the vexed water. The bare trees bordering the stream rocked under the borean wind, and at intervals sprays of snow were showered from branch and twig. Men in boats, in vehicles, on horseback, and on foot, passed briskly too and fro, enlivened by the pure atmosphere. I felt exhilarated also, and while sitting at breakfast was amused to observe the imperturbable countenance of my Indian attendant; and I wondered if this strange man could really be proof against atmospheric influence. I inquired of him as to his religion; when he pointed silently to his

forehead, on which was engraved three perpendicular lines.

I marvelled why this man should have had the seal of his mystical faith thus set upon his brow, forgetful of the self-confusing fact that the emblem of my own faith was tattooed upon my arm.

I longed to transfer myself into the open air; so I hurried with my breakfast, and proceeding to the habitation of the charming actress, was invited in by her mother.

Mrs. Melrose, like many of her country-women, was very extravagant in expression, and made common use of exclamations such as are only employed by Englishwomen in extreme circumstances. There was an extraordinary amount of nervous energy in this woman's nature. Whatever she bestowed her attention upon, even to the veriest trifle, became invested with a peculiar interest. A total absence of reserve characterized this person, for she now related to me a great deal more of her private history than was at all warrantable, and also invited my opinion on many of her disclosures.

I was beginning to grow seriously annoyed at the infliction thus given me, when my loquacious vexer, stopping short in the midst

of an account of her courtship with the late Mr. Melrose, uttered the startling exclamation, —"Grand Dieu! mon beau-frère!"

I observed through the window a burly, thick-set man, advancing with self-important air up the garden path. Feeling strongly indisposed to make the acquaintance of this man, I hastily arose to go; but the little Frenchwoman would not listen to my words of leave-taking, and I was constrained therefore to remain. She left me to receive the new comer; and presently a bull-like voice sounded in the passage, with inquiry after the health of the suffering maiden. The voice of Mrs. Melrose, in returning an answer, had, I remarked, a strange, fearful tremor in it. Some whispered conversation took place, and then the room door was opened, and the new-comer stepped in. "How do you do, sir?" he growled, "I am Captain Melrose."

I bowed to him distantly, and returned a few common-place words. Then, requesting me to resume my seat, he took a chair. This man was of Herculean mould, with coarse features, deeply pitted with small-pox. He was blind in one eye; but his seeing one was, I thought, quite enough of itself, for it glared upon me with such a terrible expression

that it inspired me with a feeling of apprehension.

"Now, madam," proceeded the Cyclop, turning to his sister-in-law, with an assumption of gallant bearing which but ill suited him, "be it your pleasing task to narrate the chivalrous conduct of this young gentleman towards our dear Eve, fairest of her sex."

Thereupon the voluble little Frenchwoman poured forth a positive torrent of words in my honour, designating me a "preux chevalier," a "very Bayard," and Heaven knows what besides.

I was overwhelmed with confusion on being thus fulsomely praised, and I proceeded to remonstrate with my flatterer; but did not succeed in producing the desired effect upon her.

"There 's my hand, sir," cried the truculent Captain, abruptly staying his sister-in-law's panegyric; "you 're a trump!"

I could not consider myself a "trump," for I accepted his hand, while unwilling to do so. An interchange of cards took place, and then Captain Melrose proceeded to avail himself of the opportunity to improve our acquaintanceship. He extracted adroitly from me such information as put him in possession of the

leading circumstances of my life, and then went on to relate a short account of his own eventful career. He informed me that, in early manhood, he had held a commission in a native regiment belonging to the late East India Company, and that while bearing arms he had frequently encountered the shock of battle. He was in London on sick leave when the Sepoy mutiny occurred, narrated he, and having by that time become re-established in health he hastened back to Calcutta, and proceeded thence, with hot haste, up to Cawnpore, where he overtook Sir Colin Campbell's force *en route* for the relief of Lucknow. Accompanying that expedition as a volunteer, he took part in the storming of the Secundrabagh. He was attached to the Sikh division of the relieving troops, and found these particular comrades exactly to his liking. "They did their fighting like very devils," asserted the captain, with voice of enthusiastic admiration. In order, I believe, to impress me with a sense of his worthiness he offered me a pinch of snuff, inviting me at the same time to inspect the lid of his box. Acting upon his invitation I remarked an inscription, setting forth that the box was a gift of honour, presented to Captain Melrose from his companions-in-arms, of the

Bengal Native Infantry. "Money can't command brevet of that kind," he remarked, significantly, as I handed him back the honorary article. I began to entertain a high respect for him; and the feeling became greatly strengthened when presently I heard him mention incidentally that he had, while in India, striven to benefit the natives rather than himself.

"I shall go to her," said the little Frenchwoman abruptly, rising from her chair.

"Right!" exclaimed the Captain, quitting his seat to open the door for the anxious mother.

"It's almost too much for me," said the courteous man of war, on the retirement of Mrs. Melrose, "to sit with my little French sister."

"Why?"

"Well, from the mere fact of my being English," explained he, shaking his head sorrowfully. "I must tell you, sir, that my sister abhors the creed of mammon, and that creed being now all in all here, she has a sore time of it from the constant attentions which are paid to her girl."

"I blush for my country to hear that!" I cried, with indignant feelings.

"You are of the right stuff, I can see," he responded, warmly. "Why, sir, I declare your noble sentiment revives me like a rainbow appearing unexpectedly after a long spell of dirty weather."

"Pray, sir," I said, annoyed at being so egregiously lauded, "give me no more flattery; I do not at all like it."

"Irritable, eh? Ho! ho! ho!" he bellowed. "Ah, well, well," he presently remarked, with a chuckle, "that is a fault belonging to every man of mettle. I myself, when a youngster, was quick to take affront. Indeed, sir, my proud temper led me to adopt the military profession, and I showed such a devil-may-care disposition out in India, that my fellows styled me 'Tippoo Melrose.'"

"You were a rare one to fight, I suppose?"

"Wasn't I just!" he shouted, with much gusto; "and, sir," he added, emphatically, hitting the table a blow which well nigh split it, "I earned, too, for myself the reputation of being the champion of the oppressed, for I made a point of dropping down upon any one of my countrymen who had done wrong to the natives."

"Your men must have liked you very much, I should think."

"Worshipped, is the word. You see I was always ready to stand their champion. Why, sir, I was once down, with a touch of fever, at Simla, when I got a message from my boys that a skipjack had grossly insulted a Sudra woman. I got up, sir, at once, pulled myself together, called the fellow out, ran him through the region of his breathing apparatus, and went quietly back to my sick bed."

This man's general manner and appearance certainly did not reconcile with his pretensions. He appeared to me a fitting representative of the swashbuckler—a Hudibras instead of a Galahad. His self-importance was positively amazing.

"See here," said he, with a significant nod, after having related the circumstances which he conceived had brought about the Sepoy rebellion. "I am confident in saying that that outbreak would never have happened if I had been in the country when things were beginning to look bad."

I arose now to depart, feeling that I had at last encountered a living counterpart of the mythical Munchausen. I certainly did not intend to ask this new acquaintance to visit me at my uncle's house; but he took the liberty of inviting himself, and I lacked the moral courage

to make him understand that further intimacy was undesirable.

While I was reluctantly informing him, in answer to his inquiry, of my uncle's name and address, the little Frenchwoman reappeared, and immediately addressed to me some dainty words of thanks which her daughter had commissioned her to offer me with regard to a present of fruit that I had sent early the same morning for the interesting young invalid. I was greatly confused, and, happening to catch a glimpse of my face in an old looking-glass standing above the chimney-piece, I was induced thereby to think very meanly of myself.

When at length I took my departure, I was fairly overwhelmed with congratulations from my newly-made friends. On reaching the street pavement, I looked upward to the higher windows of the cottage, and beheld my load-star. As her eyes met mine, a smile, like sunrise on a clear morning in its heart-stirring suddenness, broke upon her lovely features. She waved her hand at me, when I felt as though some rare essence had been infused into my very soul.

I went on my way with singularly elated mind, believing myself to have been honoured with the favouring notice of the queen of the

earth. Everything around appeared now to me conducive to happiness, and my fellows seemed as though inspired with a feeling similar to my own.

I was going along Piccadilly, on my way to my college, when, to my surprise, I met Mrs. Ellice and her daughter. The matron, on giving me her hand, looked upon me with suspicious eyes, and an instant check was thereby given to my joyous spirits. Emily, unlike her mother, smiled upon me, and frankly tendered me her hand. In the impulse of the moment, I pressed it gratefully, when a blush mantled her saintly countenance.

"Who would have thought to meet you here at this time of day?" said Mrs. Ellice, with unfriendly voice. "You seem to have abandoned your studies, for you were, I am told, absent from college yesterday, and you are, I see, playing truant again to-day."

I was certain that these ladies would regard the cause of my truantship as altogether unsatisfactory; but, nevertheless, I informed them exactly upon it. Thereupon, Mrs. Ellice shook her head, and looked very grave, while Emily bestowed upon me a reproachful glance.

"Are you engaged just now?" inquired the matron.

"I am on my way to college," I answered, with considerable shame-facedness; "I am indeed."

"It is too late for you to go to college, she said; "you had better come with us to my aunt's house."

"Most willingly," I responded, turning myself about.

"You may tell Frank the news," said Mrs. Ellice to her daughter, when we had walked a short distance.

Emily then proceeded to state that her father was at that very time attending the Bishop's reception at London House, in order to consult his Lordship upon an exchange of livings, which he (Mr. Ellice) wished to effect with a reverend brother in the country.

"Dear papa has lately been feeling somewhat unwell," explained the young lady; "it is, therefore, advisable for him to make such a change."

This intelligence took me altogether by surprise. I had, no doubt, been informed on the fact that the rector suffered from ague, which he attributed to the vapours arising from the river, but no mention had ever been made to me before this moment with regard to the step now in progress. I had considered myself of

some importance in the world, and now could scarcely apprehend the fact of my most intimate friends having thought my opinion of their contemplated movements unnecessary. My surprise was greatly increased when, after some few comments on the rector's scheme, Mrs. Ellice, with an air of sudden recollection, told me that her husband had that morning received a letter from my brother in Ceylon, announcing his intention to visit England during the ensuing spring, and that an enclosure for myself had been posted off at once to my present address.

"Your uncle must accommodate Edward with rooms," concluded she, in a peremptory tone.

"I am quite willing to give up my own rooms for Edward," I said, chafing under the cavalier treatment which I had been subjected to.

"That is good of you, Mr. Frank," she remarked, with a laugh.

"Oh, very good indeed," I responded with inconsiderate warmth, "considering that I am likely to go out of my mind if I stay on in them."

"Do you know you are already much changed from your old, gentle self, Frank?"

"I have no idea that I am changed in the least," I said ill-naturedly. "But I do think that many of my old friends are changed."

"Oh, indeed," uttered the matron, with dry emphasis.

Emily walked on in silence, with downcast eyes. She stooped slightly, like the Medicean Venus; and her classical features were suffused with a delicate blush. Never had I seen her present so charming an appearance; and I foolishly regretted that I had been so slow in recognizing her as a witching girl as well as a saintly.

"Is not your uncle kind to you?" she inquired, perceiving me, I fear, glancing at her somewhat too often.

I responded with a graphic description of the extraordinary domestic arrangements of my uncle's household; whereupon Mrs. Ellice, yielding to her astonishment, became once again friendly with me; while Emily frankly declared she was now no longer disposed to blame me for my discontentment.

In mutually restored friendliness we arrived at Eaton Place, where was situate the residence of Mrs. Ellice's aunt, and were shortly ushered into the presence of that lady.

Miss Magnet was nearly eighty years of

age, and was yet enjoying vigorous health, and, though subject, at odd times, to lapse of memory, she was still clear of intellect. She was a remarkable old dame in appearance, having a curved, sharp nose, thin, close-set lips, very keen grey eyes, deeply recessed, and overshadowed with stern brows; a protruding chin, with a strong show of bristling hairs upon it; while the entire surface of her countenance was closely intersected with deep wrinkles. She was of middle height, and slender in person to a noticeable degree. Her hands and feet were particularly well formed, a fact which the old lady was now as proud of, perhaps, as ever. She had come of an ancient Cornish family, and was supposed to be the last surviving member of her race. She possessed a large fortune in her own right, and it was generally thought that, while she would bequeath the major portion of her wealth to some institution in Cornwall, she would reserve a handsome portion for Miss Emily Ellice, who was her especial favourite.

I have never known any person who possessed so traditional a cast of mind as that of Miss Magnet. She was, so to say, an embodied anachronism, believing, as she did, that the acme of human development had occurred in the

days of her youth. With curious prejudice, she frequently made it her boast that she had never set her foot upon other than her own native soil, that she had never made a journey by the aid of steam, and that she had never used gas in either of her own residences. In short, she had refused to adopt every single invention of any importance which these later degenerate days had brought forth. I had been told that she was high-spirited and merry when in the heyday of her youth. And now, as I beheld her, bent and enfeebled with old age, sitting mumbling to herself, I marvelled to think what a change a few years effects in man. My lady wore a short-waisted dress of rich satin, with sleeves of snow-white muslin. Upon the fingers of both hands was a variety of keepsake rings. Several of these rings bore quaint legends, which, I have been told, the strange old dame would occasionally read off to herself by the hour together. She was accounted a skilful player on that nearly obsolete instrument, the spinet. She was also considered an adept at whist and chess, and enjoyed the further reputation of being the last English lady who spun with her own hands all her household linen.

Almost immediately after we had sat down

with Miss Magnet, she gave us refreshment, consisting of home-made cakes and cowslip wine. I was amused to observe that Mrs. Ellice made feint of eating more than she actually consumed, and I was able to account for her strange action on remembering the fact that the old lady had a natural antipathy to persons who trifled in any respect.

Shortly after our refection, Emily went off to have a chat with a young lady who was then on a visit at Miss Magnet's. Now, I was made cruelly aware that Mrs. Ellice had not really become again friendly with, but had merely extended a truce to me, for no sooner had her daughter quitted the room, than she recommenced hostilities calculated to bring about a decisive issue between us.

"This young gentleman is," she cried, addressing her aunt, "I am sorry to say, running after a woman of the theatre, and has, consequently, become indifferent to his studies."

"Aye, aye," returned the old lady, dreamily; "it's the way of these foolish menfolk."

"What can you be thinking of, aunt? '

"My lord of Derby, my lord of Essex, my lord of Harrington," pursued the venerable one in soliloquizing tone, nodding her head

reflectively, "were all bewitched by your fine madams of the stage."

"Mrs. Ellice," I shouted, with vexed feelings, "I defy the whole world to produce a girl with higher qualities than Miss Melrose. She is, let me tell you, madam, not only beautiful, but highly exemplary in her conduct. She is, it is true, an actress; but I have yet to learn that such a profession is degrading of itself."

"It is shameful, sir, for you to speak as you have done," replied my opponent, with severely reproachful voice.

"I cannot see any shame in it."

"Cannot you?—then you are lost."

"How lost?"

"Good gracious, sir! Is it possible you do not know that good society agrees in the opinion, that when a gentleman chases a play-acting minx, without feeling ashamed of his conduct, he is lost altogether?"

"But in the event of the play-actress not being a minx, how then?" I inquired, resentfully.

"Oh!" sneered my uncharitable foe; "that is never the case."

"I will not attempt to argue the question any further with you, madam," I said, feeling almost sick at heart.

"You had better not," she answered, significantly.

I perceived, only too plainly, that I could not well argue out the question in dispute, so I contented myself with the inward assurance that my opponent was quite incapable of anything like impartiality. I therefore observed silence, when she proceeded to lecture me severely upon my presumed dereliction of duty. The venerable Miss Magnet manifested a remarkable interest in the stormy scene taking place in her presence ; and a host of long dormant memories were evidently awakened in her mind by the words exchanged.

"This is a bonny lad we have here!" she murmured, surveying me with increasing interest. "Why, I declare he is just like my own brave joe, who went off to the wars, and never came back!" Then the dear, absent old soul kissed one of her rings, which, so I have heard it said, had been given her, some sixty years ago by a gallant gentleman, to whom she had been betrothed, and who went forth to fight the French, and fell in the battle of Talavera.

A most melancholy feature in his sad fate was, that his remains were disfigured in the accidental holocaust which took place on that

field after the carnage was over, so as to have been scarcely recognizable; and that circumstance having somehow been made known to Miss Magnet, she constituted it the grounds of a forlorn hope, that her dear love, perhaps, was not of the number of the slain after all; and her poor hope never became extinct in her faithful breast. The ring contained, I understand, a lock of the unfortunate hero's hair, interwoven with one of her own, and bore the quaint motto, "Love knows no end."

Mrs. Ellice grew more incensed against me the longer we conversed; and therefore I presently felt very anxious to make my escape as speedily as possible. I diplomatically threw out hints suggesting that I might be wanted elsewhere; but my relentless companion withheld her permission for my departure, seeming to derive a spiteful kind of pleasure in keeping me by her side, while tormenting me with most irritating upbraidings. The taunts of Mrs. Ellice alone were hard enough for me to bear; but I had to endure an additional trial, in the consciousness that the aged one was watching my every movement, and apparently recognizing some striking resemblances betwixt me and the dead soldier whose memorial she carried on her hand.

This old lady was remarkably peculiar in her cast of mind. She professed herself a staunch Christian, and yet devoted herself to the Old Testament in preference to the New. I remember once hearing Mr. Ellice relate to his wife, that one day he had called in upon her when she was in the midst of a recitation from the glowing writings of the son of David, and that, on reading out the exultant sentiment, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand," she paused, and then cried out wildly, slapping the book with her palm,—"That 's him! that 's just him!"

I experienced a sense of indescribable relief when I was at length accorded permission to retire; and as I closed the room-door behind me, a deep sigh escaped my lips. A gleam of sunlight lay athwart the stairs, and in the midst of it stood Emily, on her upward way, appearing as some heavenly being, with a glorious aureola. She remained in the dazzling beam, waiting for me to come down to her; but I paused, reluctant to disturb the rare vision so unexpectedly presented to my eyes.

"You are coming down, Frank, are you not?" she presently said, evidently wondering at my hesitation. I now hastily ran down

to her, and, impulsively seizing her hand, wished her good-bye.

"What is the matter, Frank?" she asked, divining, from my excited manner, that something was amiss with me. "Has mamma been scolding you?"

"Yes, indeed; and to some purpose," I answered, with emotion. "I fear she wishes me to consider myself, for the present, a stranger to you all."

"Oh, Frank! what have you done to so incur mamma's displeasure?" she inquired; while her small, soft hand, trembled in my grasp.

"She will, no doubt, tell you all about it," I answered, growing very warm in my face.

"I am sure you are mistaken in supposing that mamma desires you to remain away from us," said the kind-hearted maiden, looking wistfully into my eyes. "She could never wish that."

"I fear, Emily, I am not mistaken," I replied, sorrowfully; and felt then the little hand within mine start almost convulsively.

"Oh, Frank!" she cried, with voice of deep earnestness, gazing at me so fixedly as to put me entirely out of countenance, when I grew strangely unnerved, and cast my eyes

downward like some coy girl; "you must not entertain the idea that mamma wishes you to stay away from us."

"Emily! oh, Emily!" I exclaimed, with sudden over-mastering emotion. Without another word, I bent down, and passionately kissed her soft, trembling little hand. Then I left her abruptly, and in haste quitted the house.

A strange thought had suddenly entered my mind—whether it were possible for a man to love two women at one and the same time. I was conscious of a dual erotic passion possessing me now, and I could not think it was merely a momentary impulse which animated me in my feelings towards Emily, while I remained ardently in love with the fascinating young actress.

CHAPTER VI.

Cogitating over the events which had taken place at Miss Magnet's house, and which so intimately concerned my own interests, I walked through the streets, scarce caring whither. While thus abstracted, I found myself suddenly driven backward, by coming into collision with a fellow-muser, and was greatly surprised to recognize this man as my friend, James Spinner.

"You keep a careless look-out, old man," said he, giving apparently no thought to his own similar shortcoming. "Where are you bound for?"

"Really," I answered, with a laugh, "I am bound for nowhere in particular."

"Yours is exactly my own case," said he, amicably. "Let us cruise in company."

I at once agreed to his idle proposal, and we inadvertently bent our steps together eastward.

Our meeting had taken place in Piccadilly, near Bond Street, and as we sauntered towards

the Circus, I mentioned to my companion that I was feeling discontented with affairs in general.

"I have felt so ever since I was able to run alone," he replied, indifferently. "I have taught myself, however, to regard that feeling as common to thinking men."

"But the feeling, in my case, arises from a definite cause."

"Being—?"

"The desire to increase my available means."

Now, while I sought the advice of this man, who was by far the most reckless in his expenditure of all the men I ever knew, I was animated, I can only suppose, by that perverse spirit which induces certain people to go to the devil for their religion.

"You should speculate," he advised, with unconcerned air.

"Speculate, in what manner?"

"The matter can be settled at once, Mr. Cœlebs," he answered, consulting his watch. "It is now half-past three. We can manage to reach Springe Court, in the city, by four, and so catch Wire, my stockbroker, in his office. He 's the man you want."

"Then let us go to him directly," I said,

almost feverishly anxious to initiate my proposed course of speculation.

"All right," rejoined my adviser, curtly. Then he called a cab, which we entered, and were quickly borne to our destination.

I had been warned, more than once, by my good friend the rector, never to dabble in any Stock Exchange venture of a palpably risky nature; yet, shame to confess, I was now ready to stake my money in some utterly gambling concern. My present companion was reputed a very daring speculator, and was surely, therefore, to be considered an unsafe guide in monetary investment. Nevertheless, I decided to follow his counsel. We reached Springe Court in due time, and found Mr. Wire in his office, when Spinner, with his usual bluntness, at once introduced me as a gentleman desirous of purchasing stock.

"Which stock?" inquired Mr. Wire, looking at us as though he suspected we had been putting that into our mouths which steals away the brains.

"Cannot you give us a straight tip?" said Spinner.

"I am not here, you ought to know, sir, to give tips," replied Mr. Wire, coldly. "If I possessed such ability, I should use it for myself alone."

"What is fancied just now?" inquired Spinner, in no wise disconcerted by Mr. Wire's rebuke.

"Well, Patagonians are in great demand," Mr. Wire intimated graciously, remembering, no doubt, the peculiar nature of his client, and allowing for it. "You have an opportunity now, let me remind you, to sell out yours at a good profit."

"That stock would not suit my friend Amor."

"I had no thought of recommending him to buy it," said Mr. Wire, with a deprecatory shrug of his shoulders. "I mentioned it only to prompt you to sell your shares of it."

"Oh, thanks. Well, then, sell them to-morrow at the price of the day."

"What is the nature of that stock?" I inquired, curiously.

"A few words will explain it," answered Spinner, with a cynical laugh. "It is a loan, contracted ostensibly on behalf of his Majesty of Patagonia, which great potentate is at present so very hard pressed for cash as to be constrained to employ preserved meat tins as morions for his body-guard."

"But is it not absurd," I said, earnestly, though aware that my informant had exag-

gerated wilfully in his statement, "to raise a loan of money in England for a needy barbarian?"

"Fear not for that matter," cried Spinner, laughing, and wagging his head. "I can assure you that his barbarous Majesty of Patagonia will never see a tithe of the money raised for him."

"Why?"

"Now you are asking for information," said Spinner, drily, "of which you will, I think, be far better ignorant.

"But is it not a crying shame—?"

"In Heaven's name, Amor!" he exclaimed, interrupting me. "I would advise you to remain unacquainted with the Stock Exchange, if you desire to preserve a fine conscience."

"He! he! he!" laughed Mr. Wire. "Your own conscience has, maybe, grown a trifle dull from stock-jobbing; but who is to blame for that but yourself?"

"Not myself, but thou, ungenerous man," returned Spinner, with mock declamation. "Art thou not the keeper of my conscience?"

"What a joker you are, sir, to be sure!" said Mr. Wire, sniggering, and rubbing his hands together briskly. "Now," added he, with pleasant, business-like air, "let us hasten

to ascertain what stock will suit your friend."

"Pray, recommend some quiet, safe stock to him," replied Spinner, with playful seriousness.

"Some Scotch stock, I should say," suggested the stockbroker. "They are generally pretty safe."

"Perish Scotch stock! or, for that matter, anything that is Scotch," exclaimed Spinner, vehemently. This man was very unreasonable in his loves and aversions. He entertained a violent dislike for the Scotch, because of their characteristic thrift and caution, which qualities were especially distasteful to his mind.

"Sentiment," observed Mr. Wire, gravely, "ought not to be present in share-broking business."

"I cannot fancy a quiet stock," I said, feeling disposed to constitute my entry upon the sea of speculation a royal one. "Let me have that of a lottery nature."

"That way madness lies," quoted Spinner, looking at me with agreeable interest. "Now, my friend," he continued, smiling cynically, "I shall recommend you Modoc Three per Cents."

"Is that stock very speculative?"

"There is certainly no shortcoming in it in that respect."

"It may be compared," said Mr. Wire, evidently with desire of warning me, "to the mercury of the barometer."

"Is any other like it?" I inquired, feeling myself animated with a strange recklessness.

"Only Abyssinians," answered Mr. Wire.

"Well, here goes!" I cried, perversely abandoning myself to the unholy impulse of the moment. "Put me down for one thousand pounds' worth of the first stock, and five hundred pounds' worth of the second."

"You have concluded," said Spinner, emphatically, rising from his chair, "the boldest piece of business you have ever done, or ever will do, in your life."

Then we shook hands with Mr. Wire, and, returning into the street, directed our steps homeward. My mind now misgave me with the thought that I had committed myself to a very ill-judged line of action; but a spurious pride served to sustain me in the resolution to stand by my hazardous cast.

Spinner entertained me on our way, I believe with a wicked intent, with graphic descriptions of various schemes which have from time to time been promoted by needy adventurers;

describing particularly the infamous South Sea scheme, and also a nefarious one, which had for its declared object the dredging of the Red Sea, to recover the valuables supposed to have been submerged with the Egyptians in their remarkable pursuit of the Israelites. I could not join my companion in his hilarity at the matter of his recital, as I was already fearful that the Modoc Loan would turn out no sounder than the schemes of the South and Red Seas.

I longed to tell him that I had fallen in love, and that the hope of winning my divinity being all in all to me, I was sowing my small store of gold with expectation of shortly doubling it, as many speculators had done; but he gave me no encouragement to so ease my mind. He continued to torture me with his ungenerous theme during the time of our walk from end to end of the Strand.

When at length we entered Trafalgar Square, I felt instantly relieved from the oppression I suffered under while in the narrow thoroughfare. It was growing dark by this time, and the lamps were lit. The dominating masses of masonry occupying the "finest site in Europe," and the well-proportioned church of St. Martin, loomed against a clear dark

sky, impressively closing in the background, while the monument and statues on the plateau stood out with a startling prominence from the snow-covered ground. High and low appeared innumerable jets of gas-flame, which, in the frosty air, flashed with such an extraordinary brilliancy as to make the place seem as though it were dedicated for the illustration of a "feast of lanterns." And then a strange glamour was lent to the scene from the fact of the usual traffic in the highways taking place almost noiselessly.

We pursued our way into Cockspur Street, and there we agreed to go together to a restaurant. The desire had grown exceedingly strong within me to speak to my companion of the passion which so occupied me, and to obtain his opinion of it; so, when we were comfortably seated, with cups of fragrant coffee before us, and my friend had lighted a cigar, I unbosomed myself of my engrossing subject.

He received my delicate communication without betraying the least astonishment; but smiled quietly, and shook his head at me in a reproachful manner. "So, my friend," he said, after a pause, with playfully sarcastic voice, "this is the way you, a moral professor, indulge yourself in on the quiet."

"I do not understand you," I said, angrily.

"No matter," he answered, hastily, with a jerky motion of his hand. "Let us go on to speak of your siren. I am able to tell you that she is not in the least disposed to flirtation; and, besides, is constantly under a most vigilant surveillance. You must beware, old fellow," he added, with cautionary emphasis, "how you act in that quarter, as otherwise you will certainly have a redoutable military man down heavily upon you."

"I have already encountered the man you refer to, who is, I presume, Captain Melrose," I said, almost triumphantly. "He did not, however, evince any disposition to be down upon me, but, indeed, loaded me with polite attentions."

"What! is your game a serious one?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, then I shall not advise you upon it, for I should only cause you annoyance."

"You may at least tell me what you know of Miss Melrose."

"I know nothing of her reserved qualities," said my confidant, ungraciously. "I only know, in regard to her, that she can acquit herself well in a stage performance, and can execute a *pas seul* fairly. Now, I am of opinion

that a woman possessing these accomplishments is remarkably suitable for the wife of an actor, but quite unsuitable for the mate of a young medical practitioner."

"I have thought as you have said; but it has made no difference in my feelings."

"Why not consult your uncle upon your sad case?"

"You do not know my uncle, or you would not so advise me," I answered, bitterly, remembering my visit at night to my relative in his private chamber.

"My good friend," said my cynical companion, rising to depart; "if you really desire to get quickly out of your present little trouble, all you have to do is to drink a bottle of Burgundy, and call upon your fascinator immediately afterwards." Then he passed into the street, humming a lively air, and I followed him.

We parted amicably, and while he went on his way with a light heart, I went on mine with my spirits depressed to zero.

As soon as I got into my own sitting-room, I received a brief message from my uncle, that he did not wish to be disturbed that evening. This message pleased me, as I had no desire for my uncle's company. I sat down and gave myself

up to reflection, when I plainly perceived that the conduct I was now pursuing with heart and soul, was, indeed, outrageously foolish. My profession, I remembered, was one entailing upon its votaries the necessity of observing what the world considers respectable conduct; and as the courtship of a pretty actress by a medical professor was included in the list of good society's stern prohibitions, I could only expect misfortune to attend my love-chase. Then, I reflected, another item of objection, and a very important one, to my continuing with my suit, existed in the too apparent fact that the fair object of my attentions was not disposed to receive them at all graciously. I was able to overcome, to my own moderate satisfaction, every objection saving the last mentioned. I tried hard to explain it away, but my attempts proved altogether in vain.

CHAPTER VII.

I WENT no longer in person to inquire after the girl who had unconsciously charmed me almost out of my reason; but I was so inconsistent as to despatch my Indian servant, every morning, to Antonia Cottage, with his hands full of such flowers and fruit as were procurable in that cold season. Then I indulged myself so far as to always await my envoy's return to receive what complimentary message there might be returned me by my idol. The fact of my envoy's slight acquaintance with the English language was of no great moment when he took my messages, as the flowers he bore with him were eloquent enough in themselves to express my homage; but his particular ignorance mattered a very great deal when he brought me the answering messages from my divinity, for he so maltreated them in his parrot-like rehearsals as to render them the veriest jumbles of nonsense. Chund was a dreadfully calm creature, for no manifestation whatever on my part of impatience with him ever succeeded in

disturbing his equanimity in the least. By some occult mental process, I was able to extract a rich amount of sweet essence out of the wordy farrago which was, from time to time, brought me by my ignorant ambassador. Now this was, I claim, very creditable to me, as it often happened that the verbal messes I received had been transmitted, first by medium of the little Frenchwoman, who only half-understood the English tongue, and again by medium of my Indian, who did not understand it at all.

A week passed without my having called personally at Antonia Cottage, and I was beginning to think that my fever of passion would subside, when my feelings were suddenly inflamed to a higher pitch than ever. This calamity was brought about by a perfumed note which I received from my enchantress, wherein she gracefully expressed her gratitude for my kindness to her during her illness, and also stated that she was now convalescent, and proposed to return on the morrow to her professional duties; and further expressed, in parenthesis, a delicate hint to the effect that she desired me now to discontinue sending her gifts. My feelings were so highly affected by this little note from the hand of the young actress, that I could no longer blind myself to the fact

that I was so deeply smitten with love as to be beyond all hope of a speedy recovery. The frenzy had indeed, I now perceived, entered my very soul, for I had never a thought that was not connected in some way with the fair author of my tribulation.

I nerved myself for a supreme effort, and for a whole week abstained from communication of any kind with the fatal Cottage; but, alas! on the eighth day of my torturing self-denial, I was seized with an irresistible longing to behold again the dear disturber of my peace. Animated with the resolution to carry my craving into effect, I was in the act of trying to shape out some definite course to follow in the matter, when who should come in upon me but Captain Melrose.

He had timed his visit at six o'clock, evidently with the expectation of dining with me. I had, however, dined early, and therefore could only offer him some light refreshment; which, I was pleased to find, my rough friend considered quite good enough for his dinner. During the course of his meal, he glanced several times very suspiciously at Chund, who waited upon him; and when at length the Indian finally retired, he inquired of me if I knew anything of the man's history.

"Nothing at all," I answered, candidly.

"Pray call him in again," said the captain, abruptly, after a little reflection. "I should like to take some further stock of him."

I made the usual signal, when the Indian immediately re-entered the room, and stood waiting for my order, in his habitual motionless attitude. The captain now directed his blazing orb upon Chund, and presently shouted a military word of command, when the mysterious brown man made involuntarily a formal quick movement with his hands.

"Do you lock your bed-room door at night?" inquired my visitor, when we were again alone together.

"Not always. Why?"

"Because," said he, coolly, after swallowing a glass of wine at a single gulp, "your fellow has once been a Bengal Sepoy, and has learnt, I'll be bound, the trade of murder in the time of the Mutiny."

"I must insist upon you proving your charge against my servant," I said, indignantly, conceiving that my visitor had cast an aspersion on the whole house.

"You must allow me my own time for that," he returned, growing very red in the face.

"I insist that you proceed at once, Captain Melrose."

"Very good, my impatient young friend," said the captain with perfect *sang-froid*. "You may call your man in again, and I will put him through his facings."

I immediately clapped my hands, when there entered the major-domo instead of Chund. He bowed low as he came in, and hastily stated that Chund had been seized with sudden illness, and that another servant would be instantly substituted to attend upon me.

"Was Chund ever a soldier?" I inquired, impetuously.

Stoat looked up with a peculiar smile, and answered, with composure, "I believe he once had a turn in the Native Indian Army."

"Damme!" cried the captain, starting to his feet, and regarding Stoat fiercely. "This man is worse than the other. I recognize him as one of a precious set once in the service of the late villanous King of Oude, and who fell into our hands when Delhi was stormed."

Stoat returned no answer to the captain; but addressed himself to me, asking, with undisturbed composure, if I wished my new servant to fetch up for me anything in particular.

"Take yourself off!" I answered, with a shout, pointing towards the door.

He retired chuckling, as though he were highly amused. I watched him with loathing as he leisurely departed, and was able only by a severe effort to restrain myself from kicking him downstairs. This crooked, cunning wretch, was altogether hateful to my sight, appearing as an incarnation of Satan himself, and capable of any crime in the whole black calendar.

"You have a queer lot about you, Mr. Amor," remarked the captain, when we had the room again entirely to ourselves; "a tarnation queer lot, I should say."

"It would seem so," I replied, feeling depressed in spirits.

My pseudo-friend sat with me drinking wine, and carried on a spirited monologue, descriptive, for the most part, of his own wondrous acts of derring-do. I listened to him attentively, and at length arrived at the conclusion, that if only one-half of his self-related exploits had actually occurred, he must be a second Sardanapalus,—"a slayer of men, and of fiercest wild beasts, a remover of boundaries, and landmarks." He praised my sherry, and perceiving, no doubt, that I was

low-spirited, warmly exhorted me to give myself a good dose of the generous liquor. I proceeded to act upon his advice, and presently was inspired with a contemptuous disregard for all the vexing cares which, during the past week, had constantly annoyed me.

The captain, after drinking a bottle of wine, expressed himself in a form of language which reminded me of the vocabulary employed by Dugald Dalgetty in Scott's romance. Then he frequently clinked his glass against mine, to assure me that I had found a place in his heart.

"Captain!" I cried presently, feeling as bold as a lion, and rising to my feet with a glass in my hand; "I toast your charming niece!"

"Hurrah!" roared he, leaping from his chair, and bringing his ponderous hand down upon my shoulder with such force as nearly to break my collar-bone. "No heeltaps, remember!"

"The queen of hearts!" I uttered, enthusiastically, for the terms of my toast.

"Bravo!" vociferated my companion. "Let us join hands over this."

I yielded impulsively to his desire, and as we were in the act of clinking our glasses together, we were interrupted by my new servant, who entered with the announcement

that Mr. Spinner had called, and was waiting below, and that my uncle wished to see Captain Melrose before he left.

I naturally surmised that my uncle desired to see the captain with regard to the charge which he had preferred against the servants, and I tendered my advice to him to speak out boldly to the master of the house. He declared his willingness to act according to my counsel, and all eager to enter upon the matter, he proceeded instantly downstairs.

As soon as I overheard his voice saluting my uncle in the library, I ran down to the dining-room, and brought Spinner up with me to my own chamber. My new visitor immediately drew forth his pocket handkerchief, and placed it over his mouth and nostrils, assuming an expression of concern. "Mon Dieu!" he cried, with smothered voice, after looking about him anxiously for a few seconds, "this is a queer atmosphere for a man to breathe."

I was reminded by his words that the captain, while drinking with me, had smoked as though for a wager. Now, I remarked that the room was positively obscured with tobacco fumes, and I hastened to apologize to my friend for bringing him into such unwholesome air. "I shall leave the door open," I

concluded. "There is too much wind to allow of the window being opened."

"You must have had the devil himself for your visitor, to leave such a trail behind him."

"Captain Melrose has been here for the last hour or so," I stated, now feeling my eyes smarting from my late visitor's tobacco-smoke.

"The captain must surely have been smoking cigars strung together like pandean pipes," said Spinner, dryly, and then he made feint of coughing as though his lungs were resentful at the outrage inflicted upon them.

"You cannot really feel so inconvenienced," I remarked, feeling slightly offended, "seeing you are a great smoker yourself."

"Good heavens! Amor," he exclaimed, "do you think I ought to take delight in breathing reek that has once been imprisoned within the jaws of a drunken adventurer?" He proceeded arbitrarily to open the window at top and bottom, when a gust of wind, accompanied by particles of snow, entered the room, scattering my papers about the floor, putting out the lamp, and causing the fumes from the chimney to take the place of the expelled tobacco-smoke.

Impatiently I closed the window, and then addressed myself to remedy the confusion which had occurred to various appointments of the room.

"It is a mockery of knowledge," cried my companion, reproachfully, "for you, Amor, a disciple of Hygeia, to close your fœtid chamber against the purifying fresh air."

"I observe a proper caution," I answered. "You would do well to cultivate a similar spirit, Mr. Spinner."

"Ha, ha! ho, ho!" he laughed, derisively. "This savours of the philosophy which was uttered at the parliament of birds. 'Beware of flying too high,' said the eagle. 'Hear, hear,' said the hawk. 'Avoid gluttony,' said the vulture. 'Hear, hear,' said the cormorant. 'Always sing small,' said the peacock. 'Right you are,' said the owl."

"Pray cease your banter, and oblige by taking a seat with me at the fire," I said, chafing in mind at my friend's cynical address. "I wish to speak confidentially to you."

"Speak on," he replied, abruptly, taking a chair, and lighting a cigar. "I am all attention."

I proceeded to tell him somewhat concerning the captain's visit to me, and mentioned that my late guest had gone down to see my uncle. I did not, however, say a word to him in regard to the captain's charge against the servants, as I considered that matter unsuitable to be communicated to a violent man like this.

"Is Captain Melrose likely to visit you again here before he leaves?" he inquired, calmly.

"I think not."

"I make that inquiry," he proceeded, with peculiar emphasis, "as I particularly desire to avoid meeting your new friend."

"Oh, if he thinks fit to come up again," I remarked, sharply, "I shall certainly receive him."

"It strikes me, old fellow," he said, with a mocking laugh, "that you are in a position resembling that of an unwary bird hopping about a limed twig."

With a laugh, I made the self-deceiving protestation that everything in relation to myself was going on well enough, and becoming confident of my position, I pooh-poohed my friend's ungenerous conjecture that a trap was laid for me.

"Now, I will take leave to offer you a little friendly advice," he said, bluntly. "It is this, that you should at once abandon your intention of coming out as a doctor. The fact is, old chap, you are far too flighty, and too easily gulled, to have any chance of success in the medical line. Your best course would be, I think, to persuade your uncle to send you out

to India, to manage what property he may possess there."

"You would advise me to go to India, after speaking of it as you did at Richmond?"

"Oh! India is just the country for you," he continued, with confident voice; "for sentiment flourishes there like a gourd in the sun, and money is not difficult to get. And besides these tempting advantages, the natives afford an interesting study to a philosopher.

"I begin to hate the very name of India!" I said, almost passionately. "It seems to me as though some malignant spirit were continually mocking me, through the mouths of my friends, with reference to that country."

"A malignant spirit, eh?"

"Why should I leave my native land?" I cried. "Am I not as well fitted for it as the majority of my fellows?"

"Certainly," responded my companion, with provoking nonchalance.

"No doubt every vocation here is overcrowded," I pursued earnestly. "Yet there are a few altogether inefficiently represented."

"Namely?"

"Play-writing for one."

"Then are you proposing for yourself the life of a play-wright?"

"I have already written a play, which I hope will prove more worthy the applause of the public than the flimsy, sensational works now in possession of the stage."

"I must tell you, Amor, that you only prove your ignorance of the requirements of the drama, by your oblique sneer at that peculiar quality known as sensationalism," said my friend, confidently, relighting his cigar. "Shakspeare's finest plays are all highly spiced with the element which you denounce, and are, on that very account, well fitted for public performance."

"I should like your opinion on my play," I said, remembering that he was acknowledged by the literary world as an able critic in dramatic matters.

"Well, proceed with its rehearsal until I tell you to stop," he responded, putting himself in that attitude of ease so greatly affected by Americans, with his feet resting upon some elevated prop, and his body depressed low in an arm-chair.

I opened my manuscript with nervous hands, and proceeded to read out the list of the dramatis personæ. "Mary, Queen of Scots; Rizzio, her secretary; Darnley, her husband; Morton, Ruthven, Athol, Huntley, Murray, Lennox,

Argyle, Marr, Glencairn, Lindsay, Kirkaldy of Grange, Bothwell, the Countess of Argyle, and other Ladies of Honour, Attendants, Pages, Soldiers."

"A formidable list," said my critic, with apprehensive voice, consulting his watch. "I fear the time will not admit of my hearing you at full length. Pray confine yourself, for this evening, to the recital of the outline of your ambitious work."

In obedience to his desire, I read as follows: —"The first scene opens on a banqueting chamber, in the Palace of Holyrood, wherein is discovered the Queen, the Countess of Argyle, and other ladies. Rizzio is also present, and is delighting the ladies with eloquent music. All seem fascinated by the rich flow of melody evoked by the nimble fingers of the secretary, in concert with notes of his voice commemorating the glory of love. Suddenly the doors of the hall are flung open, and an armed body of men rush in and seize Rizzio. The Queen and her ladies arise in consternation, and, with frenzied cries, protest against the outrage on their privacy. The conspirators proceed ruthlessly to drag out their victim, amidst a scene of the wildest uproar and excitement; when the curtain falls.

"Act II.—A year's interval has taken place, and the scene opens on a masquerade at Holyrood. Mary and Bothwell exchange signals, when Bothwell steals out, and is followed anon by the Queen. The scene gives place to the palace garden, wherein Mary and her lover are seen together, conversing in hushed tones. Their eyes are directed towards Kirk o'fields, at which place, as their conversation reveals, Darnley, the royal consort, is lying seriously unwell. Flashes of distant lightning appear fitfully on the dark sky. Mary stretches forth her arm in the direction of her suffering husband's asylum, when, as though by her invocation, a column of flame shoots up in the distance.

"'I am free!' exclaims the Queen, giving her hand to Bothwell.

"Act III.—The scene is laid at Pinkey, near Musselburgh. The Queen and Bothwell are in waiting, with an army, to try conclusions with certain rebellious nobles, who, with their forces, are reported in sight. Bothwell discovers that his men-at-arms are unwilling to fight for his or the Queen's cause; and in desperation he despatches a challenge to any one of his noble enemies who may choose to accept it. A stormy scene ensues between Bothwell and his officers.

Presently he receives a contemptuous reply to his challenge, and, in bitter despair, he takes leave of his guilty consort, and quits the field. The hostile nobles arrive on the scene, and challenge the wretched Queen. Mary yields herself a prisoner; whereupon she is subjected to gross insult, one of the soldiers thrusting in her sight a standard, on which is depicted the murdered body of Darnley, with the infant Prince kneeling before it with upraised arm, as though invoking vengeance."

"Do you purpose, then, having your terrible drama put on the boards in a manner similar to that in which Garrick performed the plays of Shakspeare?" inquired my critic, with captious voice.

"Rather that," I answered, hastily, "than have it vulgarized with lime-light, and subdued music."

"I am afraid," he said, with an ominous shake of his head, "you will not be able to get your play put on the stage."

"Why not; when I am willing to put it on at my own expense?"

"Hilloa!" exclaimed my companion, sitting up in his chair, and staring curiously at me. "A sudden light breaks in upon me. I see you now no longer as an innocent lamb,

but as a veritable Sir Reinecke Fuchs disguised."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, I see it all now. I must confess it is cleverly planned—very cleverly indeed."

"What is cleverly planned?"

"Why, your little scheme, first to write a play, and then to set about engaging the affections of a young and pretty actress. Yes, yes," he said, in an affected musing tone. "No doubt she will make an attractive Mary, and her uncle a sufficiently unattractive Bothwell; while I may fulfil the duties of an indulgent censor. So, so! this, then, will account for the sudden grand passion, and the unfastidious acceptance of friendship, and all the rest of it."

I could not preserve my temper, while my motives were thus misinterpreted, and I expressed myself so indignantly to my suspicious companion as nearly to provoke a scene between us. As it was, he swore he would depart with but the barest friendship left in his heart for me. Soon afterwards he rose to go.

"I shall accompany you part of your way, with the hope of convincing you that you have entirely mistaken me," I said, feeling miserable at being unjustly suspected of the deepest

craftiness by this man, for whom I entertained a strong veneration.

A shudder of instinctive dread passed through my frame as I closed the garden gate behind me, and caught sight of the lamplight streaming through the window-blinds of my uncle's private room. I detected upon the blind, nearest the fire-place, the shadows of the two inmates, the one appearing with his elbow resting apparently upon the arm of his chair, and his head supported on his palm, sitting motionless, as in rapt attention; the other, in lively animation, moving his head up and down, and from side to side, and occasionally slapping his one hand with the other. This strange exhibition instantly called to my mind Goethe's marvellous drama. My uncle was old Faust, sitting in his study, weary of his very life; and the captain was Mephistopheles, tempting the impatient recluse with the promise of the speedy realization of his fondest desire.

"The captain is busy, I observe," said Spinner, with a sarcastic laugh. Without further remark he passed on; I following close behind him.

The sky was at this time charged with vapour over its whole expanse, and was faintly illumined by the dull beams of the moon,

now in her zenith. Ragged black clouds rushed, with impetuous haste, across the scowling heavens; while, to complete the discomfort of the scene, the wind blew strong and chill, causing the bare trees to give forth melancholy sounds, and sometimes giving vent itself to an eldritch screech.

Observing that my companion was taking a direction contrary to that leading to his home, I inquired his reason for so doing. He answered, to my great astonishment, that he purposed to return to the Temple by the river, in a rowing-boat, and was then going to a public-house at the street corner to pick up his men.

"Would you like to join us?" he inquired of me, carelessly, when we had arrived at his men's temporary shelter.

"I should much prefer to return to my ain fireside," I answered, shuddering at the thought of rowing down the river on such a night as this.

"You anticipate, I suppose," he remarked, cynically, "meeting your new friend again to-night, and resuming your booze with him."

My companion's mocking words prompted within me the disagreeable thought that the captain would, in all likelihood, seek me again before he left the house. With this considera-tion, I no longer desired to return home im-

mediately. "How long will you be on the river?" I inquired, on the spur of the moment.

"A short time only. The tide is in our favour."

"I will go with you."

"All right!" ejaculated my strange friend, passing into the public-house. Presently he reappeared, with two rough-looking men.

"I don't half like the job," growled one of the hirelings, looking anxiously at the sky. "It's worth more than half-a-quid a-piece."

"If you are not satisfied with the agreement," said Spinner, bluntly, "you may go to the devil."

"Never mind, Bill!" cried the second hireling, to his complaining chum. "Let us chance being drownded along o' good company."

"If you should be drownded," said Spinner, imitating his man's vernacular, "you will certainly go to the devil."

"You are a rum sort o' gent, you are!" returned the adventurous man, with voice of admiration.

Proceeding in a straggling order of single file, we arrived at the river, and took our seats in a large rowing-boat. Spinner and I took the oars, and one of our men took the rudder, while the other remained idle in reserve. We

pulled out to the middle of the stream, and then, having the full advantage of the ebb flow, proceeded rapidly on our journey.

The north wind howled about our ears, and threw up the freezing cold water over us. The poor boatmen, on receiving each unwelcome deluge, muttered to themselves words which scarcely could be found in the dictionary. Spinner, on the other hand, seemed to enjoy these baths, for he never uttered a single word of complaint, but laughed when he received an extra share. That he took his duckings in such amiable part was a matter for congratulation, as, his place being at the bow, every salute of the river was bound to reach him before reaching any other of his companions. A blinding storm of snow came on, and then the boatmen, declaring themselves unable to bear the situation, demanded to be put ashore. This Spinner sternly refused, and as he was the captain of the expedition, the remonstrants were obliged to put up with their hardships.

I became so chilled that my teeth chattered together, while my hands grew so numbed that I could scarcely pull my oar. Spinner, unlike the boatmen and myself, grew lively to an excessive degree. The snow drifted full upon his back, only to be swept off by the

spray; yet the strange being experienced, apparently, no discomfort. He actually laughed and shouted in high glee.

"You ought to find inspiration for your ambitious tragedy in this little adventure," he bawled in my ear, observing, I have little doubt, that I lugged spasmodically at my oar, almost paralyzed with cold. "This is a refreshing change for you, old chap, after your late protracted course of fire-worship."

After I had been subjected for about half an hour to the depressing influence of an Arctic wind, together with repeated drenchings from the river, the tone of my system became exceedingly reduced. Then I sank into as apathetic a condition as though I had taken a soporific. In this stupefied state, I no longer noticed anything occurring on the perilous journey, excepting at the moments of our passage through the various bridges, when I was aroused by being assailed with concentrated force by the snow-laden wind.

When at length the boat came to a standstill, I was in a state but one remove from unconsciousness. Spinner roughly shook me, until I partly recovered my animation, and then assisted me on shore. My unfortunate fellows were just able to move out of the boat, and,

after getting their hard-earned fee, departed with a manner like that of drunkenness.

At Spinner's chambers I obtained a complete change of clothing, and a glass of hot brandy-and-water, and soon afterwards was relieved from the torpor which had taken possession of me.

I had not been in these chambers before, and was interested to observe here a variety of fine musical instruments, as also several curious articles for muscular exercise. My friend presently set to work with a monstrous club, and exhibited great dexterity in his management of it. Then he sat down at a grand piano, and played a classical piece in a masterly manner. He sprang up from his instrument as abruptly as he had sat down, and, after consulting his watch, proposed that we should look in at the theatre where my divinity was performing.

"Oh, no! anything but that!" I answered, vehemently.

"Why so?"

"Well—simply that I would certainly not enjoy staring, in common with some eight or nine hundred persons, at Miss Melrose on the stage."

"There is a deal of cunning in your reserve towards your loadstar," remarked my com-

panion, with a sarcastic smile, "for it is certain that things which do not appear often, acquire an adventitious value. A comet, you know, will awaken reverence in the heart of man, while a fixed star has no effect whatever upon him. Oh," he continued, with pleasant cynicism, "we have a standing lesson to that purpose in the ways of Nature herself; for does she not set her choicest blossoms high in air, and her rarest gems deep in earth?"

I made no answer to his mocking remarks, but merely intimated to him that I should now return home.

"*Viâ* the Thames?" he said, indifferently, with a smile.

"Most certainly not; but *viâ* the Strand."

"I will escort you on your perilous way," he announced, with affected manner of apprehension.

When presently we entered the thoroughfare, the neighbouring church clocks struck eleven, and Spinner thereupon suggested that my charmer would be making ready to go home; and went on to propose that we should repair to the stage-door of her theatre, and wait to see her coming out.

"There is a rare chance, to-night, for you to do her a good turn," he concluded, knowingly.

"Owing to the snow, the cab-fares will be trebled, and so you may save your sweetheart and future mother-in-law the heavy expense of a ride home."

I impulsively thanked my friend for his clever suggestion, but immediately afterwards regretted having done so, as I detected in his countenance a certain expression plainly betokening that he was laughing in his sleeve at me all the while.

We repaired, without delay, to the stage-door, and after some ten minutes' loitering on the frozen pavement, we were cheered with the sight of a living stream of players and dancers, together with others forming the *corps de théâtre*, pouring out of the overheated building into the bitter cold open air. Anathema was hurled at the weather, I remarked, by every one of these children of the stage.

My companion was presently surrounded by a shivering yet merry bevy of *coryphées*, and as I overheard him declaring his desire to treat his unfastidious fair friends to mulled wine and some supper, I prayed, in my heart, that my divinity would quickly appear, to deliver me from my peril.

"Mr. Spinner, you're a sinner, to keep us dawdling in the snow," cried one of the girls,

making a chant of her remonstrance. Then the sinner pointed to me, saying I was the sole cause of the detention.

"Is your friend shy?" inquired a second member of the careless company.

"He is as keen as may be on getting married," returned Spinner, with mock seriousness. "So he affords a good opportunity for one of you girls."

At this critical moment there appeared the fair one of my homage. Around her throat was a thick shawl, which was carried up on her face to her eyes. Those eyes were enough in themselves for me by which to recognize my idol; but there was also her peculiar stately deportment.

"Miss Melrose!" I uttered, with diffident voice; whereupon she glanced aside at me with an indignant expression.

"Ah, voilà le bon Monsieur Amor!" exclaimed a familiar voice at her back.

"I am surprised to see you here," she said, in a tone of slight vexation, giving me the tips of her fingers.

I hastened to explain that, happening to be in the vicinity, I had taken the opportunity to meet her, in order to offer her and her mother the use of a vehicle for their journey home.

"Oh, indeed!" she replied, thoughtfully. "Well, I must thank you for your kind consideration."

"Il est un bon homme," said the mother to her girl, in a stage whisper.

While I stood in company with my charges, waiting the arrival of a cab, Spinner, with his lively friends, passed us, happily without notice.

"You know Mr. Spinner, I presume?" I said to Miss Melrose.

"I him have seen often times here," answered the mother. "He is one zat I love not. Ma fille zis man did vish to know, but I him told to keep himself avay."

I could not help smiling at the quaintness of Mrs. Melrose's idiom, and I remarked that her daughter's eyes were now twinkling with amusement.

Vehicles were in excessive demand; but I was fortunate to procure one without much delay. We proceeded home together in the cab, and had not gone far ere we plainly perceived that the journey would occupy an hour at least. While I was speaking to the maiden, she quite charmed me by her action of removing the muffler from her face, and shaking out her locks, as though in my honour. She

uttered very few words during the journey; but she listened attentively to all I said, and expressed a variety of sentiment silently by means of her eyes.

I sought eagerly to detect a ray of love amidst the various beams which she directed upon me, but my efforts proved in vain. My heart grew heavy with a strange fear, and I began to think that, after all, I might find my whole life a thing of no advantage whatever.

The pace of our horse grew slower and slower, while his breathing grew quite spasmodic. At length the poor brute stood stock-still, and refused to advance a step further, in spite of whip or call. Fortunately we passengers were then near home, so, getting out of the vehicle, we proceeded to walk the rest of the distance.

"Your England has a climate zat is abominable," uttered the Frenchwoman. "Ugh!" she continued, with a loathing shudder, "I abhor zis snow."

"But snow falls also in France," I said.

"Oh, it is not like zis," she answered, spurning some snow with her foot, contemptuously. "It is joli et agréable."

"Oh, mamma," said the maiden, laughing, "you are, indeed, very droll!"

I accompanied my fair friends to the gate of their garden, and when, at parting, I held the hand of the maiden, I ventured to press it—ever so softly.

She did not return my pressure, and I was greatly cast down in consequence. I felt my disappointment very much indeed; and while I wended my solitary way homeward, my heart was exceedingly saddened with the vain thought that it probably would have been better for my future peace of mind if, instead of doing as I had done, I had devoted myself to my careless friend and his merry company of *coryphées*.

CHAPTER VIII.

All the night long I was tormented like a lost spirit. I dreamt I was Tantalus, in the fires of the Inferno, crying out for water, which, with devilish malignity, was continually being offered to me, and then snatched hastily away. It seemed my doom to suffer a succession of metamorphoses, each of an agonizing nature. All my torments took the form of burning thirst; while I was mocked by the sight of jealously-guarded water. Occasionally I seemed to have some liquid, like molten metal, poured down my throat.

I awoke, feeling parched and feverish, and I instantly suspected I was in for a severe attack of inflammatory fever. The north wind and the Thames water had played havoc with my health.

My first fears were realized, for the hours passed on, bringing augmentation to my state of distress, and in time I began to wander in my thoughts. Delirium, at last, I am told, set in upon me.

I shall not descant on that period of my malady when death waited with life on the issue, but proceed to describe the events of the time when, the fates having decreed that life should triumph, I awoke, wondering to find myself again in the familiar world.

I looked wearily around, and observed at my bedside a figure sitting, with head bent meditatively over a book; and presently I recognized this figure as that of my dear friend Mr. Ellice. I uttered a slight sound to call his attention, when he arose and came to me with a kindly smile beaming on his amiable countenance. Strange to say, the first use I made of my restored consciousness was to inquire what was the time. The rector, taking my question in a much wider sense than I meant it to have, answered me in those beautiful words of Solomon,—"Lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing birds is come."

It was, then, the beautiful spring-time, and I had not perceived the passing of the winter. I could not bring myself to comprehend this apparent abrupt change of season. It appeared to me like the change of season which occurs in Russia. I felt a longing to look out upon the open face of day, and with feeble accents

I requested my good friend to draw up the window-blind.

Oh, how beautiful to my aching eyes looked the river and the landscape, illumined as they were then by the golden sunlight! The view was like a glimpse of heaven almost. I revelled in the welcome sight to such an intemperate degree that my poor brain quite reeled again.

"You have been very ill, my dear boy," said the rector, kindly smoothing my hair with his palm. "Yes, so very ill, that we all, at one time, despaired of you. But, thank God! our prayers have been accepted, and you are with us once again." Then he went on kindly to tell me that I had been visited every day of my critical illness either by himself or his son, and that these days had been sad ones at Wandle Parsonage. "But to-day," he concluded cheerfully, "I shall carry home such news as will cause much rejoicing among your friends."

A sob choked my voice as I tried to express my gratitude for the goodness directed towards me. The kind-hearted rector hastily interposed his word, stating that he quite understood what I wished to say, and should take it as said.

"How is my uncle?" I inquired, anxiously, on recovering my composure.

"He went off to the Devonshire coast directly your malady was pronounced serious," explained Mr. Ellice, with a sudden frown upon his brow.

"Alone?"

"No; with a Captain Melrose, I believe."

A tremor seized me on hearing this unwelcome intelligence. I feared that the hopeful promise of my new birth of life was already at an end. I proceeded nervously to inquire after her whose image had been dwelling with me all through my illness.

"She is well, and is still, I am happy to say, at home," answered the good man, gravely. "And now, Frank, I would admonish you to strive with your whole might to absolve yourself from the passion which you have so foolishly allowed to take possession of you. In every respect it is unpropitious, and, therefore, you are bound in duty to free yourself from it."

My physician now entered the room, and, after expressing his pleasure at my restored consciousness, proceeded to examine the state of my pulse. I was almost amused to note the gradual brightening of his expression as he

became convinced that he had snatched a prize from the contending spirit of death.

"The change is favourable, I presume?" said Mr. Ellice, with sanguine voice.

"My dear sir," answered the physician, agreeably, "it betokens, I am glad to say, the final retirement of the enemy."

"I bow down my heart in gratitude that our earnest petition has been favourably received," said the rector, shedding tears of joy.

"Yes, yes; that of course," said the physician, somewhat impatiently. "Yet I would claim a little credit for my own skill in this matter."

"Give honour where honour is due," said Mr. Ellice, with reverent voice. "That is a maxim commissioned from on high, and therefore incumbent on us all here to observe."

"Well, sir, it surely admits of the interpretation that honour for good performance of duty should be given by man to man."

"Heaven having the first offering."

"Cela va sans dire, as the French phrase runs," said the physician, indifferently, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I would, however, with all due respect to you, sir, state that I believe the Church has ever encouraged an unsound view with regard to the intention of supplicatory prayer. In the case of any favouring

coincidence happening after such prayer, the disposition to superstition and bigotry is strengthened. The burden of a prayer, in my opinion, ought not to be that a thing should be done for us, but that we might be given the knowledge to enable us to do it for ourselves."

The two disputants had retired to the further end of the room, in order to avoid disturbing me by their conversation, and spoke considerately in low tone, but notwithstanding their precaution, I could overhear every word they uttered.

"The teaching which you complain of belongs," replied the rector, "not to the Protestant, but to the Romish Church, and is what Luther, with other inspired men, especially contended against, and so brought about the Reformation. The Reformed Church maintains that the time of miracles is past, yet devoutly bows to the belief that the resolution of all things whatsoever depends upon the Divine will."

"Yes, yes," said the man of science, objectively. "You say that the age of miracles is past, and yet you are found, upon emergencies and under trials, offering up prayers for direct relief, instead of asking only for a knowledge

of the remedies to be applied by your own hands. The fact is, Mr. Ellice," he concluded, with polite, sarcastic voice, "your Church desires power just as much as the Catholic one, and to that end would fain appropriate the merit which properly belongs to science alone."

"I am very sorry indeed, sir," said the rector, with grave air, "to find a man like yourself, possessing high attainments, disposed to take a narrowed view of the purpose and effect of prayer. I would conjure you to bear in mind that that great duty performed in a spirit of selfishness, becomes a mere perversion."

"You misunderstand me entirely," replied the physician, with dry emphasis.

Then he called my nurse, and gave her a few instructions in the matter of some changes which were to be made in the treatment of my case.

Mr. Ellice now took affectionate leave of me for the day, departing with the promise to look in upon me the next morning, and the physician also took his departure on his rounds.

It soon became evident to me that my nurse possessed an exceedingly peevish disposition, and I dreaded that I might be subjected thereby to

a relapse. During the whole day I was left alone with my disagreeable attendant, and when, in the evening, I was beginning to despond, my spirits were revived by a visit from my friend Spinner. He presently informed me, to my great surprise, that he had called to see me every day of my serious illness, and went on to express his gladness at being able again to look into my eyes, and behold the soul looking out from them.

"I am so glad you have come," I said, earnestly, holding my friend's hand.

"You don't like the old crone, eh?" he remarked, noting the look of aversion which I bestowed on my nurse. "In that case, she must have her *congé* as soon as possible."

Then he proceeded to say that he should repair, that same evening, to Wandle parsonage, and arrange with Mr. Ellice to engage another nurse for me the next day.

"I think," he concluded, with a laugh, and sly look, "a tidy, quiet Sister of Mercy would be the right sort of nurse for you."

"I think so too."

"Then you shall have such a one," he said, confidently. "And really, you know, old boy," he continued, smiling and nodding in a knowing manner, "the company of a nice little rose-

bud of a woman, who will step about gently, and will speak to you with a soft voice, cannot fail to make you feel your helplessness rather as a stroke of luck than as a misfortune."

In such pleasant bantering strain my friend continued to address me, and presently succeeded in thoroughly raising my spirits. I now made eager inquiries concerning those persons whose phantoms had haunted me during my long spell in the night-shade. My friend did not trouble himself to remember particulars in the matter, but briefly answered me that my uncle was now with the captain at the seaside; that Eve was with her mother at their own house, under usual circumstances; and that my own domicile was still tenanted by the original staff of servants, including the hunchback.

It seemed to me like a long life-time since I last had seen the world; and now, to hear that no particular change had happened in that interval, caused a curious feeling of amusement in me.

"Has she ever asked after me?" I inquired, hesitatingly.

"I believe *she* has," he replied, with his familiar, sarcastic voice. "And other shes, of minor importance, have, I understand, tendered similar courtesies. Miss Magnet, Mrs. Ellice,

and Miss Ellice, are of the number of those lesser lights."

While I was grateful in my heart to every one of the kind persons who had displayed interest in my fate, the "attar" of my gratitude was reserved for the darling young actress.

Within an hour Spinner took leave of me, excusing his short stay with the considerate statement that he was unwilling to imperil my recovery by a long course of lively conversation, with consequent excitement. "Try to bear with your ancient witch attendant for a few hours," he said, encouragingly, at parting. "And then look out for a comely, demure young person, wearing veil and wimple, and carrying in her hand a posy of violets and primroses."

After my friend's departure, I grew once more depressed in spirit, and the hours passed on without bringing sleep to my aching frame. I lay listening for the quarter-hour chimes to ring out from the tower of the old parish church; and never had the intervals seemed so long to me as they did on this weary night.

The hag who attended on me seated herself at midnight by the fire, and imbibed cup after cup of tea, with admixture of gin. Presently

she fell asleep, when a dismal snore was emitted from her nostrils at every respiration. This new horror was at first almost unbearable; but in time I grew accustomed to it, and then ingeniously turned it to advantageous account. Finding that each nasal groan was equivalent in point of time to a brace of seconds, I was thus enabled to carry out continuously my horological observations. This curious employment, indeed, afforded a sensible relief to my overtaxed mind. It relieved me from the painful suspense of waiting ignorantly from one quarter to another.

At length, to my inexpressible satisfaction, I beheld the window-blind slowly lose its ghostly appearance, and grow diaphanous. The phenomenon informed me that night, with her gloomy train, had departed to the antipodes, and bright Aurora was here in her stead. I found myself able now to lie awake somewhat patiently. Brighter and brighter waxed the light, and at last there came suddenly through the blind a flood of glorious sunshine, illuminating every part of the room. It was as the song of a rousing trumpet, for almost immediately there ensued in the street a variety of sounds, indicating that man was up and doing.

The hag sitting in the chair now awoke, and

stretched herself with a prolonged yawn. Presently she arose and mended the fire; then filling a kettle with water, she laid it on the coals, and resumed her seat, to watch for the steam. After the dreary old crone had fed herself, she washed my face and hands; and I felt decidedly refreshed by the process.

Early in the forenoon Hugh Ellice came in to see me, and brought with him a bouquet of spring's sweetest blossoms. I took the fragrant flowerets tenderly within my hands, and calling them by the names of all those dear souls who had ever been good to me, I kissed them again and again. Dear Hugh was so overcome with joy at seeing me myself again, that he fairly sobbed outright; and I, too, was overpowered with emotion.

"This will never do, you know!" cried Hugh, lifting up his face, and smiling through his tears. "We must cheer up!"

"Why, I declare!" I cried, with amused interest, looking out of the window, "the day is imitating us." I had observed that a sharp downpour of rain was taking place in the midst of the sunshine, and it struck me as being a natural reflex of what was occurring within the walls of my own room.

The physician now arrived, and observing

that my companion and I were moved to tearful laughter, he ordered poor Hugh to take himself off without delay, and further commanded him not to return until he was able to behave himself like a man. Hugh obediently went away, declaring his determination to brace up his nerves, and revisit me on the following day.

The worthy doctor proceeded to question me on my symptoms, and on learning that I had not slept since his last visit, he wrote out a prescription for an opiate draught to be given me at night. He then intimated that the Indian servants wished to pay a visit to me in order to present their congratulations at my recovery.

I readily consented to the request of my dusky well-wishers, and presently they all filed into the room, making gestures of obeisance, and giving vent to guttural exclamations. They honoured me with a form of courtesy known as the *Panchânga*, which is performed by touching the ground with the forehead, temples, and hands. This act of reverence is reserved only for very special occasions, and is but seldom extended to a Christian. I was so favoured, no doubt, on account of my being regarded as beloved of the Great Spirit, thus to

have been snatched, as it were, miraculously from the grasp of death.

In the impulse of the moment I put forth my hand to be pressed by my present visitors after the English fashion of greeting. But I instantly withdrew it, on remembering that such contact would involve an after-process of washing on the part of these Hindoos, who regarded any immediate act of touch with one not a worshipper of Brahma a pollution, requiring bodily cleansing, and the rehearsal of a number of *mantras*, to be got rid of.

I experienced a strong sense of relief when the last of my strange visitors disappeared out at the doorway. It had been almost terrible for me to behold the rank of keen-eyed, mysterious, dark figures staring at me, as though they were commissioned by the God of the universe to carry me into His presence.

After the physician had gone, I was left again alone, for long-seeming hours, with my odious nurse. This creature exhibited no inclination to converse with me, although she chattered almost continuously to the various inanimate objects lying around her. I was in time so affected by her unnatural practice, that I began to regard her as a relic of the once-flourishing family of witches.

I kept myself on the alert to detect footsteps on the stairs; for I expected a visit from Spinner. My desire for the arrival of my looked-for visitor grew, at length, so intense, that I even cried aloud the words, "Come, come!" and at that moment, strange to say, there entered the very man I had called for. I sat up in bed, and joyfully clapped my hands, but I abruptly ceased my muscular demonstration on remembering the peculiar observances of my uncle's household.

Spinner ordered the old woman into the next room, and then sat down at my bed-side to amuse me as best he could. He immediately produced a very happy feeling in me, by letting me know that he had been at work that same day composing a serenade, to be performed by the person who should play the part of Rizzio in my forthcoming drama.

Feeling naturally anxious to hear his musical piece, I requested him to rehearse it; whereupon he at once summoned a servant and bade him go and ask his Serang for a guitar. The order not being understood by the Indian attendant, Spinner wrote it down, and in less than a quarter of an hour afterwards a fine guitar was produced. My friend twanged the strings of this instrument in a manner plainly

betokening that he was familiar with it. For a few minutes he studied the score of his theme, and then, with clear, resonant voice, sang the lyric, accompanying his voice with a series of exquisitely concordant sounds.

"Bravo! bravo!" I cried, with all my strength, feeling enraptured by the performance; whereupon the ugly old nurse popped her head into my room, crying shame that a sick person should be excited in such a manner, just at the time when he was to take a sleeping-draught.

Upon this Spinner sprang from his chair, and threw his instrument down. "Hecate is right!" he exclaimed, earnestly. "This proceeding is injudicious. I must leave you, my boy."

I begged him not to go until he had seen me fairly under the influence of the dreaded nepenthe. After hesitating for some time, he kindly consented to remain for awhile, although, as he declared, it was very repugnant to his feelings to watch one dear to him yielding to the power of a stupor-compelling drug.

"To please you, old fellow," he presently said, with sudden alacrity, "I shall act as your Ganymede, on this occasion." Then calling in the old crone, he bade her go and fetch him

the sleeping potion; whereupon, with much querulous complaint at not being allowed to manage the whole affair herself, she brought from the next room a small phial, and laid it on a table at my bedside.

Spinner immediately took up the phial, and curiously examined its contents, and then remarking that the liquid looked of uncommon strength, he proceeded to further examine it by smelling and tasting.

"It is quite possible a mistake may have been made with this damnable stuff," commented the amateur pharmaceutist, frowning at the draught. "It appears to me overcharged with the deadly opium-juice." After a little serious reflection, he declared his determination of having it accurately tested by the dispenser from whose labòratory it had been obtained, and promptly sallied out of the house.

My nurse was indignant at the freedom taken by Spinner, and, in his absence, she went on at a fine rate, saying, amongst other uncourteous utterances, that he was no gentleman.

When my impulsive friend returned, his enemy betook herself, croaking like an old harpy, into my sitting-room, and he, unconscious of having provoked animosity, proceeded

to pour out for me a sleeping-draught of a lighter tint than that which he had taken away.

Naturally I was anxious to know whether any mistake had been discovered with regard to the first draught, and I inquired accordingly. My friend curtly bade me not trouble myself in the matter, but fearlessly swallow the dose he offered me, and then compose myself to sleep. I shrank back in fear as this dark-browed man approached me, bearing in his hand the glass containing my draught.

"Drink!" he said, laconically; and, passing his disengaged arm around my neck, he put the glass to my lips, and compelled me to swallow its potent contents.

"Oh, don't leave me now," I entreated, with the awful consciousness that I was irrevocably consigned, for a certain space of time, to the thraldom of obliviousness.

"Rest in peace, my friend," he returned, in almost a solemn tone. "I promise to remain by you until the dawn of to-morrow." Then he sat down at the table, and resting his head upon his arm, gazed at me with a tender expression.

Feeling comforted by my friend's promise, I leaned back upon my pillow, and, after address-

ing a heart-felt prayer to Heaven for mercy and grace, composed myself to fall asleep. Presently I heard Spinner go into the next room, and close the door behind him. Then I heard him conversing with the nurse, and although all that was uttered between them sounded in my ears a mere hum, I could detect that anger was in the one tone, and indignation in the other.

After some time of this expressive murmuring, there ensued a dead silence, which was followed by a noisy hubbub, contributed by three voices.

I had been growing drowsy during the monotonous hum; but the wrangling voices roused my nerves to activity. The cause of the quarrel was at length accidentally made known to me, when the nurse came bouncing into my room, slamming behind her the door, which rebounded from its frame and stood ajar. I now overheard Spinner demanding who had taken the sealed paper from the phial of opiate which had been returned to the druggist; and the detested hunchback answering that the nurse had removed that sealed paper.

"Produce the paper," said my friend, sternly.

"I used it to light a candle," replied Stoat, in a careless tone.

"A strict inquiry will be made, I promise you, into this matter," said Spinner, with emphasis. "I have given the phial into the hands of the dispenser, and he is ready to swear that it has been tampered with. I, myself, believe that a deliberate attempt has been made upon the life of my unfortunate friend; therefore I mean to stay here until some reliable person arrives to take faithful charge of him."

"Your suspicion is very unjust, sir, to say the least of it," returned Stoat, with accents of suppressed fury. "If a mistake has occurred in the way of a killing quantity of morphia having been put in the draught for Mr. Amor, the druggist has made that mistake."

"We shall see," said Spinner, coldly. Then he walked into my room, and, looking towards me, smiled affectionately as he met my gaze; but on catching sight of my nurse, who was crouching, with outspread palms, over the fire, a heavy frown instantly succeeded his smile. He stood still for a few seconds, and seemed disposed to order the hateful old creature to quit the room; but he decided instead to vacate it himself.

I heard his footsteps pacing about the next chamber for a long time, and I wondered how he would beguile the many hours of his pro-

mised sentinelship. I thought to call him in again beside me, but I lacked the power to do so. Slowly on and on I seemed to sail, out into a wide and surgeless sea, where all was vast and majestically idle. At length came oblivion.

I awoke in the morning, finding myself in the company of my faithful friend and the good rector of Wandle parish.

Mr. Ellice — kind-hearted gentleman! — shed tears of emotion, when he beheld my eyes gazing intelligently upon him.

"Look at the poor boy!" he cried, with broken voice, to Spinner; "why, he is himself again!"

"I hope not," said Spinner, with dry humour.

"It would seem you were nearly being poisoned, my boy," said the rector to me, after I had been treated to a wash and breakfast.

"I heard all about it before I fell asleep," I answered, with a smiling side-look at Spinner.

"You must surely be a very master of craft," said Spinner, resentfully, "to surreptitiously obtain that information, and go to sleep with it fast locked up in your breast."

"Frank acted rightly in avoiding comment on the subject," remarked the rector. "His duty towards his uncle forbids his favouring any disagreeable reflection directed against the house."

"I believe that the uncle himself has a finger in the pie," said Spinner, impulsively.

"Good God, pardon this man for his wanton indiscretion of thought and utterance!" cried the rector, with solemn voice. Then he took the rash young barrister severely to task, for daring to accuse particular persons of attempted criminal action, when evidence strongly tended to show that there was no wicked intention, but that a deplorable mistake had occurred.

"The king can do no wrong," muttered Spinner, when the rector had done rating him.

Mr. Ellice proceeded warmly to scout Spinner's idea that foul play had been intended towards me; and he recommended that no further complaint should be made in the matter, beyond the despatch of a few lines to my uncle, letting him know what had happened. He agreed to the proposition that a fresh nurse should be engaged; but, even with regard to that matter, he was of opinion that my uncle should be requested to give his sanction.

Spinner's face was terrible to look at, as he

stood in scornful silence, listening to the punctilious advice of the world-wise rector. I never was more impressed by the power of human expression than when I watched the play of emotion exhibited by the features of my impulsive friend. I was reminded thereby of Homer's grand lines on the conflicting agitation of his chief hero.

> "Achilles heard, with rage and grief oppressed,
> His heart swelled high, and laboured in his breast;
> Distracting thoughts by turns his bosom ruled,
> Now fired by wrath, and now by reason cooled."

The rector's prudential lesson stirred its recipient only to burning indignation. He would not trust himself to utter a single word. In gloomy silence he stalked over to me, and pressed both my hands in a nervously affectionate manner; then, wheeling round, he bowed to the rector, and abruptly left the room.

Mr. Ellice forbore to comment at any length upon my friend's audacious conduct. He sat for some considerable time by my bedside, and gave me the benefit of his pious advice. I was now enabled to understand many subjects of which hitherto my mind had had but a very raw conception. I had been so far vain-

glorious as to assume, with regard to the Christian faith which I was attached to, that I knew just as much of its great principles as any man who had made it his especial line of study; and now my eyes were opened to the extreme emptiness of my assumption.

The worthy rector parted from me with the exceeding satisfaction of knowing that his time had been employed to good purpose. Shortly after Mr. Ellice's departure the physician came in, and, after a short examination of me, expressed himself quite satisfied with my progress.

I grew dull when again I was left alone with the croaking old hag who officiated as my nurse. I was, however, elated to a very high pitch by the events of the afternoon: first, in the good fortune of having a natty, soft-spoken, and cheerful little woman to wait upon me instead of my banshee; and again, on receiving a beautiful bouquet of golden and purple crocuses and violets, enclosed in lace-edged, scented paper, having written upon it the words, "A tribute of regard from Antonia Cottage."

Ah me! what a rich amount of delight I derived from that little group of spring blossoms.

CHAPTER IX.

Day by day I made steady progress in recovery, and at length grew sufficiently strong to take out-door exercise when the weather happened to be fine. Spinner, on the day after that upon which he was reproved by the rector, sent me word that he was going to Christiania by a schooner-yacht belonging to a friend. My uncle favoured me with but a single letter, in which he congratulated me on my convalescence, and stated his intention of returning home shortly. He had written previously to Mr. Ellice, in answer to that gentleman's communication with regard to the presumed mistake which had occurred in compounding my draught, expressing his indignant surprise that he should have been subjected to annoyance about a bungling affair, which he considered ought not to have been spoken of beyond the walls of the apothecary's shop.

With my mind constantly occupied with

speculations as to my future, together with the delicious consciousness of a steady, gradual restoration of power to my brain and muscles, I had not cared to look into a newspaper since the time when I had first left my rooms to revel in the fresh air and sunshine. Happening one day to pass a newsvendor's shop, I was prompted to buy a paper; and taking it home with me, I sat down to enjoy the perusal of its contents. My eyes first sought, rather naturally, the obituary, and on reading off the names of several persons who had died in the early spring of manhood, I felt very grateful to think that my own name had not yet been added to that roll. I gladly turned to peruse the record of the world's doings, and had scarcely begun when I received such a shock as sent my brain reeling. I read what seemed to my excited imagination equivalent to my death-warrant, being no less than the announcement of the total and irremediable collapse of the Modoc Three per Cents.

I saw myself now simply ruined in fortune, having not nearly means enough wherewith to continue my studies and pay for my maintenance. My uncle had invited me to live with him, and had never uttered a word to indicate that he ever intended to throw

me upon my own resources; but I was already sick of my present home, and eagerly desired a change.

Impatient to learn the worst, I took a cab, and sped to Springe Court, to see my stockbroker. Mr. Wire was out; and as I was told I should not be able to see him for two hours, at least, I inquired of his clerk if he was able to give me definite information on the subject of my visit.

"Oh, the Modoc loan is nowhere now," answered the clerk, coolly. "The Yanks have hung Long Jack."

"Long Jack?"

"Yes, the leader, you know, of the Modocs."

"And has his money been escheated?"

"Well, I don't know that he had any to escheat."

"There was the loan."

"But he didn't get any of that, did he?"

"I am seeking for information."

"That will be rather difficult to get over the Modoc job, I fancy."

"At all events it is a total collapse?"

"That's quite certain."

I tried to conceal my chagrin, as I passed out into the street, and animated by a strange perversity of spirit, I felt disposed to expend

carelessly what little money I had remaining. I hired a cab to take me home, while an omnibus might have served me perfectly well.

I attempted to deceive myself with regard to the heavy stroke of misfortune which had fallen upon me; but I was not clever enough to do so. My vain efforts somehow recalled to my memory the conduct of a pig which, years ago, had been stuck in my presence; indeed, the animal had the best of the comparison. The porker, on feeling the thrust of the knife, had at first set to squealing with all its might, as though aware of its ruin, and electing to die with bitter lamentation; but shortly, appearing to take second thought over the matter, it went about trying to feed, with its accustomed grunting. Strange to relate, it managed to maintain its self-deceit, and so got along pretty comfortably to its end.

I went straight to my own room, and sat down wretchedly dispirited. Presently I summoned philosophy to my aid, and was comforted with the reflection that, only a few weeks previously, I had been in a far more doleful state of bankruptcy than this of the purse, for my very life was then hanging, as it were, by a

thread, and not one of my good friends entertained the least hope that I should ever see the light again. Yet, here was I, with my pulse once more beating temperately, and the fair prospect of a long career before me.

CHAPTER X.

THE sad proverb which declares that "misfortunes never come single" was strikingly illustrated in my case. On the day following that when I got news of my loss of a thousand pounds, I received from a gentleman in the City, who was a friend of Spinner's, a telegram containing the following pregnant sentence, "If you still hold Abys—— Stock, get it off your hands without delay, at any sacrifice."

I felt myself obliged for this favour; but my conscientious scruples prohibited me from taking advantage of private information to benefit my own interests at the cost of those of some unsuspecting person. I resolved not to take advantage of the pitiful opportunity now offered me of saving my purse at the sacrifice of my self-esteem. When I had thus decided, an almost miraculous feeling of satisfaction took possession of me; and I thought that the reward thus given me was immeasurably superior to any gratification which I might

have obtained for myself by trickishly netting a sum of money.

I was not, however, suffered to dwell long at peace with myself. The afternoon's post brought me a letter from my uncle informing me of his intention to return home the next day, and instructing me to meet him at the railway station. This intelligence revived my old forebodings with tormenting force.

In due course I waited at the railway station for my uncle. Punctually the expected train glided alongside the platform; when I beheld, to my great amazment, my erst saturnine relative looking out of a carriage window with his thread-like lips contracted in whistling action. I also observed he was wearing tinted glasses instead of the old green shade; and I was glad further to note that his countenance had lost its original dull, leaden aspect. Captain Melrose accompanied him, and conducted himself, as usual, with marked forwardness. He first assisted my uncle on to the platform, and then attended to the delivery of the luggage, and to other duties incidental to travelling. On grasping my uncle's hand, I remarked, with a shudder, that it was still as cold and flabby as ever to the touch.

The carriage was in waiting, and we all

entered, and proceeded to my uncle's house. Now, for the first time in my experience, my relative took his dinner in company. I was glad to see that he had become able to eat solid food, and drink a glass or two of wine. This wonderful change in his physical capabilities had been effected, the Captain informed me, by the natural remedial agents, sea-air, and gentle out-of-door exercise.

We took our dinner in the chamber of horrors, and were waited upon by a set of brown men, with countenances as inscrutable of expression as that of the Egyptian Sphinx. The pictorial abominations on the walls so offended my sight, that at length I impulsively expressed my abhorrence at them; whereupon the Captain declared that he considered them the finest artistic pieces extant. After dinner my uncle invited his new friend to smoke a pipe of tobacco, and proceeded himself to take a similar indulgence.

I presently perceived that my relative had become greatly subservient to the will of the ex-warrior. This was strikingly evidenced when the tobacco-smoking was in full activity. Happening to get his nostrils saluted with a whiff of smoke from the mouth of his companion, the captain assumed suddenly a stern

expression, and proceeded peremptorily to inquire of my uncle if he had put a pea of opium in his pipe, that caused his smoke to stink as it did.

"Just the slightest morsel," answered my uncle, with a strange conciliatory tone. "Not like a pea, but a mustard seed."

"You must not forget your promise," said the captain, elevating his hand, in a warning manner.

"Oh dear, no," returned the old man, with eager accents; "I shall not forget it."

We had eaten our dinner while it was yet daylight, and the day had arrived at that stage when the light meets the darkness. Chund now officiated as servitor. His master instructed him not to bring in candles, but merely to stir the fire into a flame.

"But I ought to consult your inclination on the subject, Captain," said my uncle, with sudden consideration.

"Oh, give me a fuel fire for my light, any time," returned the Captain, with blatant voice. "My long experience of campaigning has made me partial to the sight of a blaze."

The Captain was in remarkably high spirits, and proceeded to take great liberties with his host—at one time bantering him, apparently

to his enjoyment, respecting a certain school-governess on the Devonshire coast who had cast "sheep's eyes" at him.

"He! he! he!" piped my uncle, withdrawing into the shade almost precipitately.

"Oh, you won't chum any longer with your old stocks and stones," continued the bold man of war, with a significant nod. "You have learned lately a thing or two which has opened your eyes to the folly of the old game."

"Oh, Captain, Captain!" remonstrated my uncle in a tone of gratification; "you must not speak like that."

It was evident to me that my studious relative, like the bookworm Faust, had shaken off his old cheerless habit at the instance of the tempter, and was now thirsting to take those carnal pleasures which hitherto he had refrained from participating in.

"By-the-bye," said the Captain, as though suddenly prompted to remembrance; "you asked me, just as we arrived at the station, if I had ever been in the district of Burdwan, in Bengal. Why did you propose that question?"

"I have a small estate there," my uncle answered carelessly.

"If you require a manager for it, Mr. Gall, I can recommend you a man."

"Who is he?"

"Captain Jack Melrose, at your service, sir."

"I cannot accept you, Captain," said my uncle, nervously; "for I have already decided to give my nephew the charge of that estate."

"What! I go out to India?" I cried, awe-struck at this unexpected confirmation of my foreboding.

"And why not go there?" said my uncle, with irritable voice, from the gloom.

"My dear boy," remarked the Captain, in a friendly admonishing tone. "Believe me in saying you are now offered a rare chance of getting to the temple of fortune *viâ* a short cut. Take my advice; don't refuse it."

"Seeing you desire that chance for yourself, Captain," I answered, with my mind in a turmoil, "I shall not stand in your way."

"Your present pursuit is a very unlikely one," sneered my uncle, "to lead to your ultimate advantage."

"I suppose it may be so," I returned bitterly, with the thought that he referred to my love-chase. "Yet I feel unable to relinquish it."

"What do you allude to?"

"You surely need not ask."

"By the gods!" exclaimed the Captain, with voice of fierce energy, starting to his feet and swinging his right arm in every direction, "I shall not permit you, young man, to speak in a strain as though you *honoured* my niece with your attentions."

"Nothing is further from my thoughts," I faltered, taken completely by surprise.

"Look 'ee here!" continued the blusterer, with his terrible single eye shooting resentment at me. "You must now drop your little game. The fact is, I am authorized to say that you have not the ghost of a chance of winning my niece's hand."

"I cannot accept your word in that matter," I said, staring back at my bully with scorn.

"That won't prevent me from giving you the reasons I have to support my declaration," he shouted, striking the table violently with his ponderous fist. "First and foremost, there is the girl's own word that she does not favour your attentions. Next, there is the word of the mother, attesting that she does not wish to see any more of you. And, lastly, there is my word, desiring you to drop your game for good and all."

"I shall ask the ladies to speak for themselves, Captain Melrose," I returned, with contemptuous emphasis; "your present statement is only of value from its declaring your own disposition in the matter."

"So you choose to throw down the gauntlet to me," said the Captain, with voice of assumed calmness. "Well, I accept your gage. Now, mark my words," he added, resolutely, pointing with his forefinger towards me. "I warn you to avoid henceforth paying your addresses to my niece."

"Quite right, Captain; quite right," uttered my uncle from his shadowy retreat.

I answered firmly to the Captain that I should not in the slightest degree respect the injunction he had laid upon me; and then turning to my uncle, who avoided my gaze, I declared that, while I was willing to yield obedience to him in ordinary affairs, I would certainly refuse to submit the direction of my feelings to his dictation.

"You are blind to your own interests," said my uncle, fretfully. "I can only suppose you are mad."

"A fool to himself, at any rate," quoth the Captain.

"According to your opinion," I remarked,

with disdain, "William Wallace, of Scotland, and William Tell, of Switzerland, might each be dubbed a fool to himself."

"And Lucifer, of Hades, too, for that matter," said the Captain, with a derisive laugh.

"Soyez tranquille, mon bon Capitaine!" sniggered my uncle. "Remember this nephew of mine is a good Christian."

"I certainly desire to be so," I answered resolutely.

"Yet you act according to the principles of paganism."

"In what respect?"

"You take up certain principles, imagining that they constitute the virtues, and yield them your soul's devotion. Now such practice, let me tell you, is true paganism."

The Captain warmly applauded my uncle's words, and proceeded to state it was his conviction that each man valued his religion according to the benefit which he might expect to get out of it.

I saw plainly that the Captain was a man of expediency. He was just such a man, thought I, as the one in Æsop's fable, who, with the same breath blew heat to his hands and cold to his soup. Once, in my presence, he had

extolled the three leading Christian virtues, and vowed he should ever be found the champion of purity in all its manifestations. Now, with base subserviency, he roared in laughter, and cried out "Bravo!" on hearing his patron make mockery of my moral principles.

With disgust I quitted the company of these two corrupt beings, and retired to my own room. I had scarcely thrown myself into an easy chair when I was astonished by the sudden arrival of the same esteemed friend who had, but a few weeks previously, sworn he never again would be seen within these walls.

"Ah, Spinner!" I cried, impulsively seizing both his hands. "I am so glad you have come."

"Anything up?"

"Everything."

"Oh, nonsense, man! Why, you 're not dead yet?"

"It might have been, perhaps, to the advantage of the whole world, as well as to my own," I said, with bitterness, "if I had taken that draught which you averted from my lips."

"If you really think so," returned my

friend, drily, "then you must henceforth account those persons who attempted to effect your quietus, not wicked, but wise."

I at once declared that I was resolved to leave my uncle's house, and proceeded to inform him on what had occurred in it since his last visit. I told him also of the monetary losses I had sustained; and at the same time tendered him the assurance, that I ascribed the blame of my unwise speculations entirely to myself.

He had thrown himself down upon an easy chair when I began the recital of my doleful budget of news, and continued throughout to loll in a remarkably careless attitude. But no sooner had I finished my narrative, than he sprang to his feet, uttering an impatient exclamation, and paced for several minutes silently about the room.

"Well?" said I, at length.

Upon this he stopped short in his peregrinations, and stood for a few seconds regarding me with a troubled expression.

"Well?" I repeated anxiously, with a forced smile.

"You want my advice?"

"Yes."

"Well, Amor, my boy, I believe that, under

your present circumstances, it is incumbent on you to accept your uncle's offer."

"I would rather starve in the streets!"

"Ah," said my adviser, with a pitiful smile and shrug of his shoulders, "starving in the streets is an infernally disagreeable alternative."

"Yet I would rather accept it."

"Oh, bosh!" he uttered, resuming his promenade.

"I am doubtful of my uncle's disinterestedness in his proposal to me."

"Doubtful!" cried my companion, abruptly, with pitying accent, pausing in his walk, and looking at me keenly. "Why, man, his motive is as plain as a pikestaff. He wishes to marry your flame. And, really," he added, with considerate air, "I am inclined to think that such a consummation would not be amiss for yourself or the gentle party—and certainly not for the old man."

"Come what may," I said, heartily, "I shall not accept my uncle's offer."

Spinner laughed pitifully at my declaration, and stepping over to the window, looked out for some time, apparently in serious thought. "Look here!" he said, at length, suddenly wheeling round, and laying his hand familiarly

upon my shoulder. "Considering you have lost money through my agency, I will now offer you a half-share in a cargo of onions, which I am about to ship from London to Bombay."

"Onions!" I uttered, in amazement. "Why, that is surely a strange sort of merchandise for you, a gentleman, to trade in."

"Very vulgar, but very profitable," he said, with mock-apologetic voice. "Yet it may be reasonably argued that onions are not more vulgar merchandise than cotton or coal. I may be, I must admit, mistaken in my conclusion, for I am too much of a cosmopolitan to distinguish niceties."

I declined his offer with thanks, declaring that I could not bring myself to accept any bounty at his hands; whereupon, growing angry, he denounced me as a hopelessly foolish fellow, and one of whom nothing could be made.

I was much chafed in temper by his unkind remarks; and I was about to caution him to moderate his freedom, when he disarmed my resentment by suddenly changing his sarcastic manner to that of pleasant banter.

"Now favour me with your advice," I said, hopeful of some good counsel from my world-

experienced friend. Though this strange man was extremely daring in his concerns, he had yet been, on the whole, successful. Therefore I accounted him well fitted to advise me how I might earn my livelihood.

"You won't go out to India?" he inquired, as he cut out rings upon his walking-stick at the fireside.

"Certainly not, under my uncle's patronage."

For some two or three minutes he remained silent; and then holding his ringed staff up to the light, and gazing at it with critical, half-closed eyes, he uttered the disquieting words, "You are a fool to yourself." I felt all the more disturbed on remembering that, but an hour before, words identical with those had been addressed to me by the Captain.

"Better a fool to myself, than a timeserver."

"Pshaw!" he ejaculated, admiringly contemplating his idle piece of carving.

"It would seem that the whole world is arrayed against me," I cried, with sudden bitterness of spirit, flinging myself upon a couch.

"What immeasurable conceit!" remarked my companion, with sneering voice. Then he laid his notched staff into a corner, and leaning his arms deliberately upon the table, pro-

ceeded to speak to me in a candid manner, which acted upon my turbulent spirit like sunlight upon a fire. "Your nature is so intensely egotistical," he said, "that you have come to account your own being the most important in all creation. Now I take leave to tell you, Mr. Frank Amor, that you are indeed not at all extraordinarily gifted. And as you are not largely possessed of chips, you must—and no mistake about it—strictly observe a policy of toleration to your neighbours, and repression to yourself, to have a chance of success in life."

My heart sank within me to hear myself thus reckoned up. I knew that my strange friend, though naturally violent, could be, on certain occasions, as calmly philosophic, as ever was Solon or Lycurgus. I was able presently, however, to convince myself that he was following a preconceived plan in thus putting me to sore mental distress, for no sooner did he see that his merciless advice had proved effective, than he addressed himself to comfort me afresh.

"No man," he went on to say, "can possibly get on in life without a staunch friend. Now, old boy," he concluded, heartily, holding forth his right hand, with a smile, "I would offer myself as your *fidus Achates*."

I grasped his hand with much emotion, when he exhorted me to pluck up my spirits and fear nothing.

He now intimated his intention of returning home, and I decided to accompany him part of his way. His familiar satirical mood was revived once again before he left the house. This was brought to bear upon me, when a winged insect, happening to flick through the flame of a candle, fell upon the table, and whizzed round in a spasm of agony. Pointing to the scorched creature, I quoted the well-known metaphor, by which the fate of a foolish man is compared to that of an unwary moth that finds its utter ruin in the core of its attraction; whereupon my cynical companion, holding up his hands in affected astonishment, cried out that he considered my acumen superior even to that of great Æsop himself.

"I had no thought of palming off the metaphor as my own," I said, hastily.

"I am glad to hear you say so," returned the cynic, with assumed gravity, "for I was dimly fancying I had heard your metaphor before."

My feelings, I plainly perceived, were too sensitive to bear with the ordinary incidents of life; for my friend's bantering words, like

scorching sunbeams after a summer shower, dried up, as it seemed, the happiness which he had so lately bestowed upon me.

Desiring to leave some instructions before I went out, I clapped my hands to summon my attendant, when I was surprised to find Chund again in waiting upon me, instead of the Indian who had been fulfilling that duty from the beginning of my convalescence until now. I inquired of my man if the passage were clear, as I desired to avoid again encountering the Captain. Chund, who had hitherto borne himself with the gravest manner possible, now amazed me by an outrageous departure from his habitual deportment. Distorting his body, limbs, and countenance to resemble those of the major-domo, he stealthily approached the door, and applied his ear to the key-hole.

"This fellow evidently means to let us know that the dwarf has been listening to our conversation," cried my friend, indignantly.

I felt much incensed to think that I was being subjected to a vile espionage, and I proceeded to propose that the presumed spy should at once be summoned up to my room, and put to examination, and that, in the event of his being found guilty, he should be treated to summary punishment.

Spinner discountenanced my Draconic proposal, advising me to treat the matter with contempt. Going on to discuss the affair with me, his temper presently became inflamed at the skulking, low act which had been done by my uncle's head man against me; and now, dismissing all his prudent reserve, he recommended that I should pack up my things, and leave my present abode instanter. "You can have a sofa-bed in my chambers until you get settled," he kindly concluded.

I had already made up my mind to migrate on the following day, and to that resolution I adhered, notwithstanding the additional annoyance to which I had been subjected.

My friend grew very hotly incensed on further consideration of Stoat's despicable conduct. In the flush of his anger he would have beaten Chund for not interfering with the "Serang" whilst in the exercise of his contemptible act, only that I interfered to prevent him.

Chund, grateful for my interference on his behalf, bowed his forehead to the ground, the while maintaining an invocatory chant in my honour, addressed, I could detect, to the great deity *Prajâpati*—the Hindoo god of fire, air, and the sun collectively. The Indian, on the

conclusion of his prayer, glided, almost simultaneously with the wave of my hand, out of the room.

Spinner, breathing maledictions on my uncle's house, now took his departure, I following him. As I turned to close the garden gate my eyes again encountered the portentous shadows of my uncle and the Captain in earnest conversation.

"Look at the shadows on the blind!" I cried to my companion, almost fearfully.

"I once saw your uncle's shadow with that of a tempter bending over it," he answered, with an instinctive shudder. "I certainly prefer to let that picture fade out of my mind, than perpetuate it by a second impression."

We proceeded together for some distance in thoughtful silence, and I was growing deeply absorbed in speculations as to my future, when my friend suddenly roused me by grasping my arm.

"Listen!" he exclaimed, in affected bombastic tone, "while I unfold to you a sorrowful tale. I am in love."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, sad to relate, I am now sorely affected with the tender passion."

"Who is the object of your passion?"

"Guess."

"Nay, tell me at once," I said, laughing. "I had, indeed, believed you to be, like Napoleon, or the Greek Alexander, incapable of truly loving a woman."

"She is entitled Miss Emily Ellice."

"Good God!" cried I, inwardly, to the All-wise Infinite; "how, and to what intent, has this been brought about?" My feelings were as those of one newly awakened from oblivious slumber, and who finds himself painfully confused by crowding recollections of life.

"I suppose you are wondering how this affliction of mine transpired?" remarked my friend, divining my thoughts.

"Tell me," I requested, with my head in a whirl.

Thereupon he proceeded succinctly to explain that, while I was being held down by delirious fever, he had frequently visited the Ellice family at their new house, and meeting Emily on several of these occasions, had been subdued by her wondrous influence.

This conquest of my fierce friend's heart appeared to me like that memorable subjugation of the violent King Kenneth by the pious and beautiful Queen Margaret. "Does Emily

reciprocate your affection?" I inquired, with my heart throbbing all too quickly.

"Not yet, I fear," he replied, gloomily; "not yet."

"Nil desperandum!"

"For Heaven's sake, Amor!" he cried, with sudden irateness, "avoid that trumpery Gallic practice of conventional exhortation."

"Understanding the state of your feelings as I do now," I answered, with a laugh, "I am able to bear with your infirmity of temper."

"You cannot possibly understand my feelings," he returned, vehemently. "I must tell you, Amor, that I am conscious of being under the influence of some philter—some marvellous essence, which is splitting my nature in twain; the one part, seemingly, a new birth, the other my old self. I am undergoing a strange internal conflict, my original self claiming the direction of my will, my second soul claiming the direction of my heart."

I replied that I believed the longing for kindred sexual partnership was an impulse animating all life whatsoever; and then, availing myself of the apportunity to exculpate my own unapprovable disposition towards the dual state of existence, I proceeded to express my

opinion that man, considered in himself alone, was really only the one part of a perfect sex. For it was recorded in all sacred writ treating of the genesis of the human race, that out of man proper was created a second being to complete the sum of human life.

"Nature is, no doubt, very precise in her arrangements for the course of reproduction," returned Spinner, in cynical tone. "And it is extraordinary, too," he added, with a sneer, "that a man never loves a woman, but she is certain to love him in return."

"I hope you will find it so in your own case," I said, retaliating on my aggressor with his own dart.

"Should I fail in my suit," he responded, with a fierce glare in his eyes, "I intend to proceed to India, and devote myself there to the duty of extirpating 'man-eaters.' Work of the kind cannot fail to keep every faculty intent, and, besides, would be beneficial to thousands of my fellows."

"Alas!" I uttered, with a bitter laugh, "that love should play such pranks."

"My case, I promise you, will never be as yours," said my friend Stoutheart, unwilling to accept my sympathy. "To hunt after an unwilling damsel is not to my taste."

"How know you mine to be unwilling?" I inquired, in surprise.

"I suppose I ought to tell you."

"Certainly you ought."

"Well, then, I must recall to memory your deep sleep—the sleep from the draught."

"I can remember the draught, but not the sleep which it produced."

"That act of sleep was like the trance which lay on the prototype of our kind, when his masculo-feminine nature became quickened into disseverment, and his second part looked curiously into the eyes of the first, and was moved in wonderment and compassion."

"I am at a loss to know what you mean."

"I mean to convince you, Amor, that much, of almost sacred interest, may pass within a yard's distance of a man's eyes without his seeing anything of it. I ween that amazement will now sit upon your brow, and that you will acknowledge yourself a very prince of Myopes, to learn that while you lay with wide-ope'd orbs, spell-bound by potent juice of poppy, your Eve looked down upon you, and touched your forehead with her lily hand, pitied you with her tender eyes, and said 'Poor fellow!' audibly, with her rosy lips."

"Good Heavens! what does this man mean?"

I cried, unable to interpret his figurative speech.

"Heaven bids me speak in response to your appeal," said my strange companion, again in his old light tone. "Know, then, that your Eve, fair masterpiece of nature, stood by you at the time I refer to, *in propriâ personâ.*"

"Spinner, you mock me now!"

"I do not mock you, but address you in sober earnest," he returned, seriously. "The circumstance which I have related took place actually, and is in nowise due to my imagination. I now seriously aver that, as I stood by your bedroom window, watching the gradual development of another link added to the mighty chain of time, my dreamy eyes were startled into lynx-like wakefulness on beholding your loadstar standing at the garden entrance, evidently with the intent of performing a most graceful act of inquiry after your condition. On the instant I ran downstairs, and begged the fair Imogen to so far contemn prudery, as to ascertain, with her own eyes, the physical condition of the then deep-slumbering Posthumus. On being assured that a nurse was present in the bed-chamber, she ventured to approach your bedside, and, bending down over you, swept your death-like face

with her ambrosial tresses, and passed her very breath into your nostrils."

The startling intelligence now given me threw my whole system into a state of insubordination. The beating of my heart sounded in my ears, and my mouth was so parched that speech became impossible.

"Thy heart, man, belongs of right to some coney," exclaimed Spinner, jeeringly, noticing with a wicked pleasure my totally disorganized condition. Then he seized me with both his hands, and laughing in my face, roughly shook me, as though to administer a good-natured punishment to me for my faint-heartedness. "Steady, poor Eros!" he added, in tone of compassionate rebuke.

"I cannot, just yet," I returned, with a gasp, feeling a burning sensation in my throat, and a perfect bewilderment of brain.

Desirous of regaining strength and composure, I looked above, and, the sweet vision of the starry host meeting my gaze, I became calm.

I parted with my friend with the promise of meeting him on the following morning to go down together to Wandle parsonage on a visit to the Ellice family. I was somewhat strongly disposed to defer this duty until I should have

been favoured with a formal invitation; but Spinner succeeded in overruling my punctilious objections, and so it was settled that I should accompany him.

I now turned homeward; but, feeling indisposed to go indoors, I whimsically decided to pass by way of Miss Magnet's house in Eaton Place. The object I had in view was a perfectly idle one. I desired a bracing walk. A walk, to be beneficial, should have, I thought, certain predetermined limits.

I soon reached my destination, and, as the hour was late, I found nothing to gaze upon save a black-looking wall pierced with still blacker window-apertures. Feeling dream-inclined, I crossed to the opposite garden railings, and leaning with my back against them, gave way to reverie. The canopy of leaves over my head shrouded, with almost tartarean darkness, the retreat I had selected. I thus possessed the advantage of seeing without being seen. I had no thought whatever that anything of startling interest could then take place in this normally peaceful locality; but I received a practical lesson of the wisdom of the old adage, which affirms that very extraordinary circumstances often occur at unexpected moments and in unlikely places.

All around and above me appeared typical of perfect tranquillity, the picture consisting of a dark fringe of motionless foliage, a series of dwelling-houses, with scarce a light in them to relieve their sombre gloom, and, overhead, an unclouded, star-spangled sky. I was gazing in abandonment of thought, with my eyes directed towards my old friend's house, when I was startled at beholding a man stealthily emerge from the main doorway, carrying a small box under his arm.

I at once felt certain that this fellow must be a thief, and I was to some extent amused with the humorous thought that while I was out in my calculations as to chances of disturbance to myself, the thief was still further out in his.

This man probably had not reckoned upon being detected by an idle, love-sick youth, who was out a-mooning.

Without hesitation, I advanced from my shadowy retreat, and challenged the box-bearer to stop and explain his reasons for being at a private house in that unseasonable hour; when he, without answering a single word, took to his heels in precipitate flight. I followed in pursuit, and the thief, finding that my powers of locomotion far exceeded his own, lightened

himself of his burden, and then made his utmost to escape.

The box sounded with a chink upon the pavement, and I guessed it to contain articles of plate or jewellery; but I was so anxious to catch the thief that I did not halt to pick up the booty.

After a long race I came up with my quarry, and laying hold of him pulled him violently backward; when, he grasping me in return, we fell together. Strange to say, there was not a single soul visible in the streets through which this man and I had gone; and now as we proceeded to decide the question of mastership there was no one in sight for me to appeal to in the event of the momentous trial proving adverse to me.

My antagonist proved to be, unhappily for me, a cunning brute. On finding that I gained the uppermost position when we fell together, he suddenly withdrew his arms from around me, and, stretching himself out with convulsive action, murmured faintly an appeal for mercy, and entreated me to take my weight off his chest. I was foolish enough to believe in the piteous expressions which this night-fox addressed to me by word and action, and I relaxed my grasp of his throat, and removed

my knee from his body; whereupon, by an adroit movement, he raised himself to a sitting posture, and dealt me a powerful blow on the temple, causing me to reel over on my back almost deprived of consciousness.

I was unable for several minutes to raise myself from the ground, and when I had regained strength sufficient to enable me to stand upright, I found that my enemy had taken prompt advantage of his mean-spirited strategy, and was out of sight.

I was much chagrined by the unexpected reverse I had met with, and, thinking to acquaint the restful world of my mishap, I set to shouting with all my might.

"What 's the row?" presently inquired one of the guardians of the night.

I told this man of my mishap, and of the circumstances which had led up to it. He listened without vouchsafing a single word of comfort to me.

"A box, eh?" he remarked, in curt comment on my story. "Well, now, let us take a turn over your ground, and see if we can find that 'ere box."

I could plainly perceive, from this watchman's cynical tone of voice and unfriendly stare, that he scarce believed a word of what

I had said to him. I found a balm for my wounded feelings in the reflection that a man like this was not likely to be at any time ready to accept his neighbour's word, seeing that he was nightly abroad in the hours when decent-living people were abed, and had all their locks and bolts adjusted to keep out the prowling wolves; while his whole duty lay in watching the comings and goings of the enemies of goodly society, and in opposing his craft against theirs.

I proceeded in company with the sceptical watchman to try and find the thief's abandoned booty; and not a word was exchanged between us until we had entered Eaton Place, when I said that the article in question had been thrown down in that locality. Directing the light from his lantern upon the ground, he walked, accompanied by me, in zigzag manner, along the road as far as Miss Magnet's house, and thence back to our starting point. We failed to find the object of our search.

I had confidently calculated upon being able to find the stolen box with scarcely any trouble, and the disappointment I now sustained was as sore to me, perhaps, as that which once was experienced by poor Raleigh when he took his company to a given spot in the New

World, in expectation of finding unlimited treasure, and realized only a miserable failure.

"Where now can your box 'ave walked to?" sneered my fellow-seeker. I could only answer that I knew not, but supposed that some confederate of the escaped thief had picked it up.

By this time the policeman was altogether dissatisfied with me, and now gave me to understand that he should hold me in custody until I should have given a satisfactory account of myself. I had great difficulty in persuading him to comply with my request to examine the door of the house from which I had seen the burglar issue forth. When at length he acceded to my request, he attached the conditions that, in the event of this door being found in fast condition, there was to be no waking up of the household. I felt indignant at this insult; but I was so confident of a speedy vindication of my word, that I considered it was not worth while to make any protest against my companion's discourteous terms. I silently indicated the door in question, and the policeman advanced up to it, and found it to be, to my utter confusion, perfectly fast.

My custodian now appeared to look upon me

as one demented, and who, therefore, required to be carefully treated. It afforded me a grim kind of amusement to observe that he employed a coaxing tone in bidding me proceed with him to the station-house. I made no objection to his proposal, as I knew it to be entirely indisputable.

We were moving off together, when our attention was arrested by a sudden flash of light, shooting with lance-like beam into the darkness from an upper window, and presently we beheld a tall, white-robed figure, candle in hand, peering outward as though able to see things shrouded then from common vision.

My prosaic companion at first was alarmed by this apparition; but quickly regaining his presence of mind, he muttered a self-damnatory invocation, and then proceeded to say, that never before this had he known that a lunatic asylum existed in Eaton Place. His words greatly distressed me.

I thought it was only too likely that they would be repeated at the station-house, and might bring about some exceedingly disagreeable inquiries. I had recognized the lady who had so strangely looked out of the window as Miss Magnet, and I remembered having been informed that she was a sleep-walker.

But I forbore to offer any explanation to my heavy-minded companion, determining to reserve my information for some higher official.

We stood together intently watching the somnambulist, and saw her make a motion as though inviting some aërial spirit to her presence, and it seemed as though her appeal was responded to, for she withdrew after a little while, in a manner suggestive of her being in company with another. It was a weird exhibition. I would have roused up the servants to look to their entranced mistress, only that my arrestor would not hear of any alarm being given.

We proceeded through the deserted, dark streets towards our uninviting goal. My companion was evidently indisposed to break upon the midnight quietude further than he could not avoid, and we paced along together without exchanging a word. I felt at first very unhappy to reflect that my uncle must of necessity be called upon to procure my release from custody; but when I had thought over the matter for a little while, and perceived it to admit of no alternative consistent with honour, I began to contemplate it in a stoical spirit.

The way to the station-house appeared interminable, and I made a remark to that effect to

my companion; when he returned the uncivil answer that I had myself alone to blame for being obliged to tramp over a long road at a time when I should have been in bed.

We arrived at length at our goal, when I found myself numbered with an offending lot taken within the hour. The sergeant on duty was a man evidently of high type, reminding me, by his fine Roman cast of countenance, of a bust of Cicero which once had a place in the library of my reverend friend at East London. This noble-looking fellow, however, had been fated to live in constant communication with degradation and misery, and so had become perverted.

"On what charge?" he inquired, laconically, referring to my case as it was brought forward in turn.

"Charge of loitering, and raising false alarms," answered my captor. Then meeting his superior's eye, he tapped on his forehead, plainly denoting that he thought me a madman.

I could no longer endure this dense-brained fellow, with his pitiful opinion of my mental state. Pushing him aside, I appealed indignantly to the intelligent sergeant to allow me to speak for myself. He looked searchingly

at me for a few moments, and then bade me proceed. After I had explained my late irregular conduct, he bade one of his men give me a chair by the fireside, and instructed another to go to my uncle's house to obtain there the verification of my claim to respectability.

I remained for an hour in durance, and, being seated beside a good fire, I had nothing to complain of in the way of physical discomfort; but I was shockingly disgusted, during that hour of dishonour, with a succession of scenes well fitted to inspire a Dantesque epic. It is, indeed, a melancholy truth that "the one half of the world knows not how the other half lives."

The official messenger returned to declare that my references had been found correct, according with my representations. Now I was ordered to depart home, and cautioned to conduct myself in future with propriety; and in humbled spirit I again went forth into the silent night.

Alone in the hushed thoroughfares, and with the impression of my late experience fresh upon my mind, I experienced a reaction of feeling causing me to lose heart altogether. But soon the clear, cold atmosphere, and the sight also

of the familiar shining plough in the skies, restored my courage.

Arriving at my uncle's house, I observed that the library windows were still illumined, and as I wished to escape my relative's attention, I turned the door-latch as softly as a thief would, and attempted to slip upstairs. I had reckoned, however, without my host, for I had scarce reached the end of the hall when the door of the library was hastily opened, and out popped a frightsome head, capped as a judge about to pronounce doom, and the grating voice of my uncle bade me return and speak with him.

"Pray, sir," I answered, vexed to have been detected in my act of elusion, "excuse me until after breakfast."

"No," he responded, curtly. "I have already waited your convenience long enough."

I felt a chill come over me, as if I had passed into the shadow of some approaching trouble; but I was able to reanimate myself with the determination ever to refuse any surrender of my honour, let the consequences be as they might.

I went in and sat down beside my uncle, and was sadly surprised to find in him the ap-

pearance of one whose very life is a wearisome burden. I had thought he had become a new man; but at this moment, worn as he was by protracted vigils, devoted to the study of a manuscript work of Sanscrit character, which then lay open on the table, he looked more haggard, if that were possible, than he had ever done before.

I was proceeding to express my regret at having been the cause of disturbance to him, when he checked me, saying that the affair in which I had been concerned that night did not interest him in the least, and that no appreciable disturbance had been given him by it. He then went on to state that he had called me to discuss another matter in which I was concerned, and which had given him much anxiety. "I dare say you divine what I refer to," he concluded, querulously. "And I would advise you to bear in mind that I now mean to effect a decisive understanding between us."

After he had thus spoken to me he arose and moved about the room, occupying himself in dreamily shifting small articles from one table to another. I noticed that his hands trembled more than usual, and that several times he took up things by the top when he should have

lifted them by the base, and so pulled them asunder.

It was surely a most unnatural taste which had led him to fill his favourite chamber with an ugly, dread-inspiring lot of mummies and effigies. I should have thought it impossible for a man to calmly engage in studious researches while around him stood shapes of long-billed birds, as the ibis and stork, made lifelike with skilfully counterfeited eyes; and shapes of monstrous beasts, as the alligator and crocodile, with saw-like mouths set in a terrible grin; and other shapes altogether unlike anything ever created by the purposeful hand of Nature, being imagined only by man, and fashioned by him in the impulse of his unhallowed desire to symbolize the subtle influences governing the affairs of the earth. My uncle's ways of life, however, had served to convince me that a man may habituate himself to very unhealthy courses, for he had passed the greater part of his time in this same chamber since I had known him, and appeared to have no disquieting feelings in relation to the ghostly troop surrounding him.

He continued to move about the room with an abstracted air, as though he had already forgotten the business which he had intended

to discuss with me. Presently he took up, and surveyed with great interest, a curious figure cut in jade. It bore resemblance to a woman sitting on a monstrous sea-creature, and carrying a water-lily and a stringed musical instrument in her right and left hands respectively. This figure, I remembered, had once been described to me by my uncle as typical of the Ganges, and possessing the title of "Ganga." The Hindoos, he had told me, held this idol in great estimation, and he valued it accordingly. Now he became apparently absorbed in the contemplation of his favourite allegorical figure. Feeling annoyed at his unseasonable mental abstraction, I prompted his attention by wickedly remarking, in a quiet tone, that I pitied those people whose minds were given to idolatry.

"Look to yourself, before you condemn others," he said, in offended tone, wheeling round upon me in an abrupt manner, as though I had taken some gross liberty with him; and laying down his precious idol, he went on to say, with great bitterness,—"I must tell you that your own heart inclines to idolatry of the basest kind—the idolatry of self. If you had an open, instead of a narrow and vain mind, you would see that it is impossible to conduct

systematic religion of any kind without the aid of symbols. I once more repeat to you my statement that it matters not in the least what names men choose to give their gods. The broad fact will always remain that all life agrees in worshipping power under its various manifestations."

"Sir," I cried, interrupting him, unable to retain a calm demeanour, "I came not with any expectation of hearing a lecture in support of idolatry, and, believing it to be your intention to annoy me, I shall take leave to withdraw."

I was marching towards the door, with my head in the air, when my cadaverous-visaged companion suddenly stretched forth his lean hand, in which he clutched a terminal figure like the Pan of Greek mythology, so as to bar my passage between the tables.

"Beware, young man, how you act towards me," he uttered, with cracked voice, now hateful to my ears; and with menacing gestures he went on wildly to say,—"You have dared overmuch with me already, and I now bid you beware."

"What have I done that you are justly entitled to complain of?" I inquired, in proud self-consciousness of maintained rectitude of conduct.

"Look there!" he answered, pointing to a small case with glazed top lying upon the table, and quivering with nervous emotion while he spoke.

I stretched forward to examine the presumed memento of my unworthiness, and could only imagine the article to be a carefully preserved piece of burnt paper. I was wondering how this thing could be employed in evidence against my honour, when my eyes detected some writing upon it; and as I, by a sudden impulse, bent my head closer to the object of interest, my watchful companion ceremoniously handed me a lighted taper.

The words had been written with ink upon white paper; but the effect of combustion was exhibited in a reversal of the original condition of relative tint. I was able to decipher enough of the calcined penmanship to convince myself that it had been written by my own hand, with the view of sending it on to Spinner, and that, on my having re-perused the epistle, and found it to contain a somewhat too free criticism of the habits of my eccentric relative, I had set it on fire, and thrown its scroll-like ashes into the grate.

I felt deeply offended at the liberty which had been taken with me in preserving the relics

of my private correspondence, and I did not fail to tell my uncle plainly that I considered his conduct to be ungentlemanly in a very marked degree. I also asserted my right to have the burnt letter given up to me, and declared my determination to press for an apology in the matter.

"Take your miserable property away," said my unamiable uncle, bitterly. "Do not destroy it, but preserve it as a fitting emblem of your own understanding; for these ashes are, like yourself, deceitful in their apparent substantiality. And they also are, again, like yourself, confirmed in a self-sufficient and uncharitable disposition, being incapable of any impression whatever but that poor primal one that flaunts upon them now, and only await the finger of investigation to reduce them to mere dust."

I was able, strangely enough, to preserve a calmness of demeanour, and I answered my uncle, saying that I should not forget my dignity as he had forgotten his. The platonic tone in which I addressed my insulter galled him, I am certain, far more than any blustering would have done.

"Let us understand each other," gasped the trembling form before me, putting his hand

over the region of his heart, as if apprehensive of his excitement paralyzing that vital organ.

I perceived that by further stirring this man's anger there probably would result some catastrophe, and I therefore considerately refrained from making full use of a situation which was undoubtedly to my advantage; and was the more to be valued as it had come about by my inspiration of self-command—an inspiration which I could scarcely hope would be mine for any length of time.

With palsied hands he motioned me to reoccupy my chair. I preferred, however, to remain standing, experience having taught me that, in a mental struggle for mastery between two persons, if one be seated and the other rest alone upon his feet, a certain advantage is conferred upon the latter from the simple circumstance of his attitude.

I think that my uncle was cunningly alive to this, for, though urgent in his demand that I should be seated while we conversed together, he himself remained standing. He had now grown terribly agitated, and was obliged to have recourse to some potential elixir which he took from his pocket.

"You still force your attentions upon the young actress?" he said, with a manner which

I had known him adopt before, that of a moral coward who, by extreme circumstances, is driven to be brave in spite of himself.

"Well, sir, what then?"

"You must cease those attentions if you desire to serve the girl's interests, and your own besides," said he, with a severe effort to appear collected. "And in so advising you, I am conscious of conceding a great deal more favour to you than you deserve."

I felt certain that my counsellor was not honest in his advice that I should consent to choke my poor flower of love beneath the dull loam of interest, and I felt quite indisposed to treat him with the respect which I should have gladly yielded under ordinary circumstances.

He stood looking earnestly at me for a minute or two in silence, and then proceeded to say that ample evidence was at hand to prove that my attentions towards the young actress were already prejudicing her chances of future welfare.

"No one but yourself approves of your conduct in this matter," he concluded, in a strongly censorious tone, waving his arm at me in his nervous emotion. "You are aware of that, and yet you persist in your selfish course. I

am sorry, young man, for your conception of true honour."

"Is it possible for a man to stay his love to order?" I inquired, scornfully.

"Yes," answered my mummy-like opponent, in accents which convinced me that he was arguing disingenuously. "It is certainly within the power of human nature to act according to the dictates of propriety and justice in all things whatsoever. In the ordinances of your Church you may observe certain prescriptions laid down in relation to marriage. Now marriage being considered the consummation of love, it follows that, in laying down rules for its regulation according to natural fitness, the reasonable assumption is that a person who loves in contravention to the law should justly be regarded as a wanton transgressor."

I strongly suspected the purity of my uncle's motive in advocating the strict practice of self-control, and, in my desire to hear him disclose his designs, I asked him to inform me, if he could, with regard to the views entertained in the matter of the disposal of the young actress's hand.

"The knowledge I possess on that subject I shall keep to myself in the meantime," he

replied, coldly, pretending to be interested with the formation of a crocodile's jaws.

His cold refusal to reply to my earnest question hardened my heart against him, and though I plainly saw little chance of any other issue than a total discomfiture to my suit, yet I was reckless enough to resolve on continuing my unpropitious enterprise, and to reject unreservedly any terms offered for my surrender. It was, no doubt, highly imprudent, not to say foolish, of me thus to have chosen a course of action almost certain to be disastrous; but I was young, and in good health, and therefore not likely to come to irremediable grief in the event of my being signally discomfited. Besides, I was animated by the spirit peculiar to youth, which renders the contemplation of even a sudden hard-set life rather agreeable than otherwise. At any rate, I was quite unable to perceive that my perfectly honourable attentions to the fair young actress could possibly prejudice her interests in any proper way.

I should myself very probably suffer, I thought, in persisting with my ill-judged suit; yet to meanly sacrifice my passion at the dictates of worldly prudence would, of a surety, humiliate my spirit to such extent as to make me feel ashamed of myself. The old man's

advice to me, I was only too firmly convinced, had not been inspired by any chivalrous feeling, but only by the hope of obtaining some advantage to himself.

Many circumstances lately had tended to show that my present patron was also my rival. With this unpleasant conviction in my mind, I could not think of accepting any further favour at his hands.

"Sir," I said, boldly, with the sudden determination to force him to declare his secret, "am I to understand that you yourself aspire to the honour of Miss Melrose's hand?"

"Yes," he replied, with nervous haste, turning towards me with defiant air. He grew animated with a strange holy fervour, akin to that which will sometimes seize a devotee of an idolatrous religion, and in this curious vein he proceeded. "Adoration to the gods! my prayers have been heard, and Kâmadeva ordains that I shall yet be given to know mortal happiness. The fair being you have spoken of is promised me for my consort."

I felt sorely dismayed to hear him announce his expectation speedily to achieve a triumph which would have the effect at once of insuring his happiness for life, and of depriving me for ever of all possibility of joy. The old man's

words, confirming in a moment my long-sustained fears, caused me a shock so violent as to make me feel quite sick at heart, though beforehand I had, over and over again, repeated mentally to myself words to the same intent without experiencing any feeling more bitter than disgust.

"Uncle," I cried, in the jarring affluence of my sudden emotion, "your proposal is absolutely monstrous!"

Instantly he recovered his presence of mind, and advancing a step nearer me, and looking fixedly in my face, he uttered the single word, "Why?"

"Are you not broken in health?"

"Not irremediably so."

"Are you not advanced in years?"

"Speak on."

"I am certain that the consummation of your desire would constitute an outrage on that sacred law demanding fitness in marriage."

"You speak out of the redundant vaingloriousness of your state of juvenescence," said the old man, in bitterly scornful tone. "I bid you reflect well on that law which you have cited against my great intention, and, if you are not entirely blinded by your own exceeding vanity, you will be able to see that

Nature, so far from forbidding a union of two entities—the one an old man, so called, and the other a young woman,—indeed eminently approves of such a marriage; the fact being that a woman is constitutionally disposed to mate with a man whose years considerably exceed her own."

He had evidently well considered his subject, for he spoke quickly and without hesitation. The manner and substance of his argument were so powerful, that they almost convinced me in spite of myself.

I shall now proceed to translate his further disquisition of his interesting subject in my own language, as I find it impossible for me to describe the strange action of the man as he went on to exhibit how proper a thing it was for him and the fair young woman of our united attachment to mate together.

It is in perfect harmony with Nature's intention, declared he, that man should toil and strive for fortune in some shape till the close of his life's meridian; and then, having gathered in a goodly harvest, should seek to improve his happiness by means of conjugal companionship. And it is in nowise unfitting that such a one should satisfy his heart's desire for budding charms in the partner of his reposeful days, the fact being that a thoughtful man of

ripe age will prove, in all probability, at once affectionate and constant to his youthful mate, and, besides, may become an object of honourable pride to the sympathetic mind of adolescent womanhood.

Woman, my uncle went on to state, is naturally the subservient being, and is not affected like man with the feeling of love. She accepts man's conceptions of feminine beauty for her own, and does not at heart look upon man as man regards himself. She is so constituted as to be able to lead a perfectly celibate life far more easily than man; and she can also, unlike the sterner sex, accommodate herself to whatever circumstances may fall to her lot. Here I interrupted the reasoner, stating that I could not admit the validity of his argument; whereupon he gave way to moody reflection, while still maintaining his position towards me.

Presently his face grew animated with a triumphant expression, and, with eager, boastful accents, he bade me go to my Bible for proof of his argument. His appearance was so outrageously at variance with his soaring pretensions, that, dismal as the situation undoubtedly was, when I reviewed his wizened, trembling form, his close-capped, skinny head, and blinking eyes, his talon-like fingers, and

shrunken limbs, and took into account what he had said with the intent of proving himself a fit mate for a lovely young woman, I could only with an effort restrain myself from laughter. Strange to say that, while entertaining a feeling of hatred for him, I was conscious of some admiration for his unparalleled audacity of opinion.

I perceived now, for the first time, that my uncle—heaven save the mark!—was actually vain of his personal appearance, for upon catching sight of his own image in a fine steel mirror hanging low upon the wall, instead of shrinking in repugnance from the reflection, as of right he ought to have done, he appeared positively to approve of it. This served to convince me that it is a beneficent dispensation of Providence that no man but is able to find something admirable in himself, and to account his own particular excellence the very highest possible.

My uncle's contrariety of disposition amazed me, and I despaired of ever understanding him. I felt compelled secretly to admit to myself that in our present interview he had certainly gained the advantage. Observing that he had again relapsed into an abstracted mood, I cast my eyes downward, in order calmly to collect my thoughts; and when at length I

once more looked up to address him, I was surprised to find him seated in apparent resumption of his interrupted study of the manuscript. When now I spoke to him, he glanced impatiently in my direction, muttering, "Good-night!" and then bent his gaze again upon the interesting writings.

I accepted his hint, and rose to depart. As I left the room, I was conscious of a creeping sensation of fear to review the mockery of life occupying the tables, and the single figure of flesh and blood who was sitting in crookbacked motionless attitude, vexing his overtaxed mind to amass strange knowledge.

I closed the door behind me, and, turning to go up to my own chamber, saw dimly the abhorred figure of the vizier standing close against the wall. I suspected he had been listening to the conversation betwixt my uncle and myself. In the impulse of my indignation, I raised my hand to strike this mean creature, when a sudden discretionary feeling took possession of me, and I passed by him without touching him, or even speaking to him.

I sat down in my own room, and anxiously resolved in my mind the circumstances of my present life. The curious thought at length occurred to me that it would be well for me to

make a supreme effort to bring about a total change in my being, *i.e.*, in familiar terms, to run away from myself. To change one's self was not, thought I, an impossible thing. Change of scene, climate, and everyday circumstances repeatedly have been known to bring about in an individual a change equivalent to metamorphosis. Animated with the desire to try and convert my state of being into some other of a more useful nature, I went to bed, and, happily, soon fell asleep.

CHAPTER XI.

THE real world seemed to me terribly dismal and cold when I awoke from a state of golden illusion to find myself once again a poor earthworm, and dawning recollection warned me that an unhappy crisis in my fate was impending.

I was bound now to determine the course I should pursue, and, after much conflicting thought, I resolved to go on with my love-chase, in the blind hope of finding a good and happy end to it.

I was moved, perhaps, partly to my decision by the thought that it would be vain for me to attempt to pursue a course altogether antagonistic to my natural sympathies. Those who have experienced a strong attack of the love-fever, will be aware that no counteractive measures of prudence seem possible of adoption by the love-stricken one while in the delirious stage of the disorder. Presuming that those who have weathered this attack must surely number the greater part of humanity, I go on

confidently to say that it is all very well when a love-catastrophe has occurred for the prudent souls to take you, the poor sufferer, to task, declaring that, if you had followed their advice, it would have been to your advantage. While you may feel obliged to admit your wrong-headedness in having contemned the voice of worldly prudence, you feel, at the same time, that your conduct became worthy of censure only when misfortune attended upon it. We can all, of course, be wise after the fact.

Chund waited as usual upon me. Having won my favour by his unremitting attention, I informed him of my intention to depart that very day from my uncle's house. Upon my communication, he started slightly, and then, in his peculiar chanting tone, making a sign of reverence, he asked to be allowed to go with me. I answered that I was truly sorry I could not take him with me, as my means were insufficient to warrant my keeping an exclusive servant, and, at the same time, I tendered him the assurance that he might reckon upon my befriending him at any time he might find himself in want of assistance.

"Masser Saheb Amor, you Karna!" said the grateful Indian, with a strange emotional vibration in his voice; and stooping low in

obeisance, he made feint of taking dust from the ground and placing it on his head.

I was gratified at the evident attachment of my dusky attendant, and resolved to make the endeavour to get him placed as valet to my friend Spinner. While, at breakfast, I was trying to devise some feasible plan wherewith to accomplish this object, I received a telegram from my friend himself, which contained the request that I should come on at once to his chambers. I had made an appointment with him for one o'clock that day, and so was surprised at his sudden alteration of our arrangement; but, without delay, I obeyed his summons.

The morning was quite gem-like in its glittering brilliancy. Light showers were occasionally falling amidst the sunlight, and a fresh greenness appeared upon the moist face of the landscape. I made my journey preferably by water, and, under the kindly influences of the scene, I arrived at my friend's home in a cheerful frame of mind.

Spinner welcomed me with almost eager cordiality, and, bidding me take a seat by the window, wherefrom a fine view of the river was to be obtained, he lighted his pipe, and then seating himself beside me, proceeded to

relate that, after parting from me on the previous night, he had called upon an artist friend, residing in a blind street off the Strand, whom he found engaged upon a painting, having for its subject, strangely enough, a scene from the life of Mary, Queen of Scots.

"I intend to buy that picture," he declared, abruptly, putting his hand upon my shoulder, in a manner of warm friendliness. He then went on to relate that, on reaching home, he had been further surprised to find a letter from an American theatrical agent, stating that he had looked over my dramatic manuscript, and should call in reference to it the following morning.

"But do you intend to commend the picture also to the agent's notice?" I inquired, unable to divine my friend's tactics.

"No!" he shouted, almost in anger, "certainly not." Then he proceeded to astonish me utterly with the information that he purposed, in the event of the agent's taking up my drama for representation, to buy the said picture and ship it off to America, to be exhibited there under the title of one of my dramatic situations.

"But will the game be worth the candle?" said I, with modesty unassumed.

"For the picture, I fear not in the least," he returned, with more respect for truth than courtesy.

I was yet a mere tyro in worldly experience, but I was beginning to realize the necessity there is for that man to work hard who aspires to occupy a leading place in the world. Looking now beyond, I beheld various craft sailing to and fro upon the turgid stream, and on the opposite shore, amidst log-rafts and at warehouse windows, little moving figures, all busy, and the animated spectacle impressed me, as I never before had been impressed, with a deep sense of the earnestness of life.

I proceeded to relate to Spinner the adventure I had met with on the past night; but had scarce got well into my story when I was interrupted by the arrival of the theatrical agent.

The general appearance of this man, together with his manner of speech, caused quite a check to my preconceived ideal of a true Yankee, for I had thought that a genuine son of Columbia invariably showed as Cassius, with a lean and hungry look, and spake with a nasal twang—whereas this one appeared as John Bull, and exhibited no striking peculiarity in the tone of his speech.

It was a positive relief to me, in my simple disappointment, to find that the fat American had a few peculiarities in his language. He made, for instance, an indiscriminate use of the courteous term "sir," and clinched, as it were, all his periods with the affirmative, rendered politely.

I remarked to him upon the absence in his accents of the imputed peculiar twang of American natives, and I was much amused to note that afterwards he endeavoured to adopt the said twang, although it cost him considerable trouble to do so.

"Well, sir," said he, when the formalities of introduction were over, "I have gone into your play, and consider it ain't half bad. But, sir, it ain't clear enough, and that fault must be mended somehow. In a play that is meant for public rehearsal, let me tell you, lucidity is a *sine quâ non.*"

His Latin quotation seemed to be in favour with him, for he repeated it, with evident relish, twice over to himself.

"I fear," said Spinner, with a pleasant smile, "lucidity is not amongst my friend Amor's virtues."

"Mr. Amor's play must be considerably altered before it is fit for the boards," re-

marked the theatrical adept, to my great uneasiness.

"How altered?" I inquired, with a gasp.

"Well, sir, in several hows. One will be to cut out half of your long speeches, and another, to conform your scenic demands to the capabilities of the machinist."

"Oh."

"Yes, sir. The fact is, the public won't have plays that have long speeches in them, no matter how fine the language may be. The public demand 'stir and go' above all things in a play, sir. Take warning, sir, by Home's play of 'Douglas.' A fine play is Home's 'Douglas;' but it lacks 'go,' and has long, heavy speeches in it, and so it remains out of the public favour."

I had imagined, like a fledgling at its first essay of song, that my virgin performance was simply perfection itself, and I was sorely humiliated in being taught by an experienced elder that I was, as yet, totally deficient in all essential knowledge of rules, and that my untutored attempt was clumsy to a laughable degree.

"Amor, you must go yourself in front of the footlights if you aim to be a proficient playwright," said Spinner, in a derisively serious tone, while refilling his pipe.

"Well, sir, you know Shakespeare did so,'" remarked the agent, stoutly; "then, why not your friend?"

"Amor would not dare the course," said Spinner, with a covert sneer.

"'If to do were as easy as to know what 'twere good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces,'" said I, borrowing from the great dramatist. "I doubt that I could willingly stoop so far as to herd with the vulgar that I might gather begrudged store of cunning from them."

"'Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt,'" quoted Spinner, from the same author.

"Well, now to straight business, gentlemen," broke in the agent, abruptly, producing my manuscript, which had been lent him for perusual. "I have marked several alterations and abridgments, which I consider ought to be made in this copy, and when my suggested improvements have been carried out, I shall, perhaps, make an offer for the piece."

This outcome of my high expectations was indeed cruel in its meagreness. With a depressed spirit, I said to the agent that I should endeavour to reform my work according to his

recommendations; and as I thus resigned my vain assumptions, I observed that Spinner smiled to himself with a meaning expression. My blood was very full in my face at this moment, and I felt confused with feelings of shame, sorrow, and hope strangely intermingled.

"I hear you are bribing our talent and beauty," remarked Spinner, in a careless tone, to the agent, "to forsake these sea-girt isles for Manhattan City."

"Yes, sir," returned the American, lighting a cigar, and speaking now in bragging vein; "I mean to rob old Britannia of a few of her choicest rising stars. Columbia's demand for such goods, you must know, exceeds the old mother's supply."

"Ah, well, the old mother must not complain," said Spinner, dryly; "for Columbia, while depriving her of some good stuff she would gladly keep by her, is so far obliging as to relieve her, at the same time, of some she is glad to be rid of."

"That, no doubt, is the case," said the agent, rising now to take his departure, and adding, with significant tone, "If I don't see you, Mr. Spinner, before I leave England, I shall live in hopes of meeting you over the water." And then in haste he departed.

"That last remark of the Yankee's was insolent," remarked Spinner, with furrowed brows. "Do you perceive its purport?"

"You provoked his unwelcome thrust," said I, rather pleased that my friend should have been hit sorely by a verbal dart of a kind which he himself often used unfairly against his neighbours. "You maligned his country."

"His country, indeed!" exclaimed Spinner, with scornful emphasis. "How can America be accounted by any white man his country, when the fact is that its climate affects a constitution of European origin to such an unfavourable degree, as to nullify the power of reproduction in the fifth or sixth generation?"

"The earth continually shifts the plane of her axis," said I, with the unamiable desire to further discompose my impulsive companion; "so every part has an alternate turn of the best and worst climatic conditions."

A dark shade of displeasure passed over his countenance as I repeated to him the recently advanced theory of a third motion of the earth. He impetuously seized his favourite violin, and first striking from it a few bold notes by way of prelude, proceeded to play an extemporised fantasia, which seemed to rival that celebrated

one of Paganini's, given him, as he stated, by Lucifer himself.

Presently we sallied forth to call together upon the Ellice family, at Wandle Parsonage. The hour was still an early one, and I proposed that we should walk to the railway station, stating that I thought it advisable for us to defer our arrival at the Parsonage until after the time of luncheon.

My companion exclaimed against my proposal to make a tortoise-like progress to our goal. "Why, man," he concluded, impatiently, "life is too brief to allow of its being frittered away. Thirty years of anticipation, thirty of realization, and ten of retrospection. Behold all."

We proceeded along the busy Strand. Spinner, with the air of a listless lounger, remained silent until we had reached Trafalgar Square, when he uttered a low long-drawn whistling sound, and, bringing his eyes to bear full upon me, assumed the expression of one who doubts the honesty of another.

I stared inquisitively to discover the cause of my friend's suspicion of me, and presently I saw, at some distance off, the figure of my load-star proceeding towards me, on her way, no doubt, to the theatre for rehearsal.

Observing my blushing discomposure, Spinner was pleased to add to my uneasy state by quoting for my ear these lines of Shakespeare's,—" The colour of the king doth come and go, between his purpose and his conscience, like heralds 'twixt two dreadful battles set; his passion is so ripe it needs must break."

The clear sunlight was making gay the Place of the Lions, and in the midst of it, with fluttering garments, walked my siren, accompanied by her uncle, the redoubtable Captain. My heart now beat at such a rate, that, to measure life by courses of blood-circulation, I must have wasted the value of a whole hour's existence in five minutes' time. I noted that my fair enchantress had detected my presence, and was disposed to advance to meet me, and that her uncle was covertly trying to persuade her to seek the opposite side of the street, so as to avoid my greeting. The dear maiden exercised her own will in the matter, and advanced with sweet friendly countenance up to me, wishing me good morning, and adding a few other gentle courtesies in inquiry after my health.

Spinner passed on with an act of obeisance to the lady, but took no notice whatever of the Captain. I also refrained from paying any

attention to the man of war, and he at first seemed desirious of avoiding any show of attention to me. My present situation, bringing three active opposing influences to bear upon my mind, affected me so strongly as to render me unable to express myself otherwise than very incoherently. I was conscious that my friend Spinner was waiting for me, as a Nemesis, to torment me for my presumed selfish transgression, that the Captain was animated with the desire to overawe me into a perfectly stupid condition, and that the sweet girl whom I adored was wickedly, I fear, laughing my irresolution into a state of bewilderment.

She continued to remain by me, when she must have perceived that it would have been mercy to have left me, evidently to gratify her mode of opposition to her uncle's predominant desire. With the fine tact of a high-souled woman, she presently took the management of the conversation upon herself, and conducted her task with such excellent capability, that I speedily recovered my composure, and talked again in a rational manner, and was able to laugh without appearing like an idiot.

"I hear you are going to leave your uncle," she said, departing from the former conventional tenor of our conversation. "I hope,

Mr. Amor, for your own sake, you will not do that."

"I suppose I must do it," I answered, with my eyes directed downwards, and with my heart full of gratitude at the gentle consideration she exhibited towards my welfare.

"My dear," interposed the Captain, with impatient accent, "pray remember your engagement."

"I wish, Mr. Amor, you would call on mamma and me before you decide on leaving your uncle," said this queen of hearts, paying no regard to her guardian's admonition. "Remember, we shall expect you very soon at Antonia Cottage."

"No, no! certainly not," cried the Captain, hastily, in voice of stern authority.

"Then, uncle," returned the maiden, with a look as haughty as any that ever sat upon the brow of the proud Semiramis, "if I cannot invite Mr. Amor to my mamma's house, I shall certainly ask him to see me somewhere else. I wish to speak with him on a subject of much importance to both of us, and speak with him I will."

The Captain was not one to be easily put down, yet this beautiful, self-willed, young woman quite succeeded in setting his tyran-

nical authority at nought. She looked now towards him with a splendid scorn playing upon her lips and nostrils, and defiance flaming from her lustrous eyes; and the man of war, perceiving the hopelessness of his coercive attempt, instantly retired from the field.

"Come to-morrow," said the compelling fair one, holding out her hand to me with an air of mingled favour and anger.

I pressed her hand with much warmth; whereupon she snatched it from my grasp in a very ungracious manner, and gave me a look which served to cool my heart of a good deal of ardency which had been kindled there by the events of the meeting.

This maiden was highly impulsive of nature, and the variableness of her disposition was strikingly exhibited as I ruefully tendered an apology for my unwitting offence; when she gave vent to a ringing laugh, and pleasantly reminding me to call upon her, bade me good-bye, and departed to rejoin her uncle.

I was once more in the clouds. My divinity had smiled upon me, and had allowed me to touch her hand, and I hugged the remembrance of these Elysian delights to my soul.

I crossed the street to rejoin my friend, and then inquisitively looking back to ascertain

how the Captain was getting on with his rebellious charge, I saw him walking on with head inclined towards the ground with an air of dejection, while the wilful maiden was stepping along with mien the haughtiest, perhaps, of any of her sex abroad throughout the whole city.

I found Spinner in a fit of towering resentment towards me for thus obliging him to wait idly about for some five minutes' time, and in his anger he remarked, jeeringly, that in his estimation I resembled Abelard in nature, and that he thought I should devote myself to follow the example of that worthy, and so carry my unquenchable erotic flame with me into a cloister, where I might be able to go on deluding myself until my day of translation.

"Perhaps, Sir Plato," I returned, "you will, yourself, some day be a fellow-sufferer in these throes you now deride."

"Perhaps—but not likely," said he, coldly; but notwithstanding the indifference of his tone, a deep flush suffused his countenance.

"Supposing you find," said I, with the desire of retaliating on my pretended stoical companion, "that your charmer proves unresponsive to your passion: what then?"

"Have you any well-grounded anticipations

of such a result to my suit?" he inquired, with his brows bent sternly upon me.

"I have no anticipations of the kind."

"Then don't go on making yourself singularly disagreeable," said he. Then he called a cab to take us quickly to the railway station.

We exchanged not a word while on our journey by cab, and only said what was absolutely necessary to one another as we shifted from road to rail.

The train moved off. As it went along at high speed I looked through my carriage window and beheld an interesting panorama of sunlit landscape. With my thoughts preoccupied, the rustic pictures presented to my eyes appeared like the phantasmagoria of a dream. Cottages embowered in the spring greenery; cattle and sheep browsing in the verdant fields; ploughmen with their horses at work furrowing the ready earth, with an expectant company of rooks following in their train; river-courses fringed with alders and willows, the water shining like silver in the sun. Sometimes a hamlet or diminutive town, with illumined, deserted streets and courts, and an air of repose pervading the whole of the habitations, suggestive of a halcyon existence to their indwellers. Anon an open, variegated

champaign, all bedight with the cheerful favours of the amorous season, a glorious eye-feast of delicate tints leading up to the distant hills, and then to heaven. Yet all the charming views that my eyes derived from nature were poor to be compared with the bright spirit-moving pictures invoked within my imagination for the vain delight of my self-deluded soul.

Man, I suppose, is hardly ever content to take the world as it is, but exercises his mind to conceive an imaginary world. The real world requires man to plough, sow, and reap, before he can hope to get bread, and it necessitates him sometimes to feel cold and thirsty, and often to suffer heart-galling disappointment, whereas the imagined Cosmos need have nothing in it of an unpleasant nature.

My fellow-traveller was apparently as oblivious to the measured march of time as I, for when the train stopped at Croydon, and the railway guards shouted out the fact, he started from his seat with a look of surprise.

I proposed to him that we should walk the rest of our journey, and he now appeared so ready to accede to my proposition for delaying our arrival at the Rectory, that I began to think he was growing disposed to abandon his intended visit. Moreover, he insisted that

we should partake of some luncheon, whereupon we proceeded to an adjacent hotel. He was so liberal in his potations, that I was the more certain my conclusions were correct; but he seemed proof against the influence of his stimulant.

"Strong drink acts upon a man," said he, "only to aggravate the disposition in which he has recourse to it. Depression rules with me now, and I find that my drink is not acting well upon me. I must, therefore, endeavour, by-and-by, to stimulate my flagging energies with draughts of spring-day air, and by exercise pump the elixir well into my system."

"What is the matter with you?"

"Matter enough. 'Tis called faint-heartedness or, otherwise, want of pluck."

"In respect to what purpose?"

"A purpose which is, in my own appreciation, tantamount to casting a main for future happiness."

"Good heavens, Spinner!" I cried, divining his intention, "am I to understand that you have brought me with you on your errand to ask Miss Ellice to be your wife?"

"My present purpose is precisely what you have guessed it to be," he returned, in a somewhat unfriendly tone. "I am, however, totally

at a loss to explain why I have brought you with me."

"You must have some strange motive in it," said I, annoyed at his want of confidence.

"It is, I swear, only an indefinite one," he returned, now in his habitual mocking tone. "I suppose that as my enterprise is manifestly fraught as regards its issue with the determination of my fate, I have, in weakness of spirit, brought you with me in order that, in the event of the great question being answered in apparent disfavour, you might be able to comfort me with some ingenious reading of the sibyl's decree."

I felt myself quite unworthy of my very place in the world, seeing that I had become almost mad in a love which was unrequited, and felt vexed at heart that now my friend had brought me out to encourage him in seeking Emily Ellice, of all women, for his wife.

I strove to suppress my selfish feelings, and to bend myself to his enterprise. This man, thought I, is rich, generous, and highly intelligent; while the maiden is beautiful in person, and excellently gifted in mind. Then surely no reason could exist forbidding that they should wed, unless it were that love was felt only on one side. Perhaps, too, my friend's

passion was, like my own, an emotional admiration entirely divested of design.

I proceeded to inquire if he had already asked permission from the young lady's parents to prosecute his suit, when he informed me that he had done so with success, but that he had not given them any intimation of his present visit, as he preferred it to be a surprise.

I could not help thinking he had made a sad mistake in bringing me with him, and I suggested that he should allow me to return home, whereupon he, with unappreciative regard of my motive, sternly bade me say no more upon the subject, but either to consent to accompany him as he desired, or promptly to refuse acquiescence in his plan of action, and thenceforth account him no longer my friend.

I felt sorry at having my well-meant advice thus rudely resented, and, on the first impulse of my vexation, I was about to renounce my friendship with this man, who demanded a constant indulgence of his own will, and would allow no permission to mine, when happily my good genius came to my aid, and I was moved to repress my angry discontentment, and so preserve a friendship which I really valued.

"I shall do as you wish," I said warmly to

my companion, extending my hand to him, which he readily accepted.

The day was a memorable one. It had broken the long-sustained trance of insect life, and called into active existence a multitudinous army of air-cleaving creatures with resplendent virgin wings, as if the gaudiest blossoms of spring had become endowed with an itinerant existence. The hawthorn hedgerows were all splendid in their show of fresh, green leafage, with the top shoots tricked out in white buds; while on the ground appeared the sweet, pink-edged daisy and the golden buttercup.

Nature was altogether very gay and busy on that fine day. The air was alive with the bleating of lambs, the singing of birds, and the chanting of bees, every living thing being quickened to the top of its bent. An occasional shower of refreshing rain would go sweeping over the glad landscape, and then the sun would beam upon the besprinkled fields, causing the grass-blades to lift up their drooping heads, and appear to grow under one's very vision. There was a soft, stirring breeze, which was scented with the stolen fragrance of flowers and the newly turned earth.

Spinner soon had his spirits revived by the gladsome influence of surrounding nature, and

began to grow exuberantly lively, taking unnecessary leaps over heaps of stones or lopped branches of trees lying by the roadside, sometimes making the air resonant with choice fragments of opera music, anon giving way to loud peals of laughter, provoked by quaint conceits of his sarcastically humorous imagination.

"Amor," he cried to me, with almost spent breath, after he had vaulted twice over a field-gate, "the thought occurs to me that nature should have made you and me only one man instead of two, for a being endowed with your melancholy temperament, together with my animal energy, would have been, no doubt, a second Mahomet; while, as we are, there is on either side too much of the one quality and too little of the other."

I had been observing that the sun was already well down in the west, and I therefore thought fit to caution my careless companion to observe greater expedition in our progress; when, putting himself in a burlesqued tragical attitude, he said, paraphrasing the words of Shakespeare,—

"Ha, I forgot! but now your prompting comes to whet my almost blunted purpose."

His garbled quotation evidently awoke uneasy thoughts within him, as immediately after

he had spoken a wrinkled look of trouble settled upon his face, and he exhibited no more lively abandonment of spirits; but collected himself sternly, and set off with such resolute long strides that it was as much as I could do to keep pace with him. I tried to rally him into his former good humour; but to all my well-meänt badinage he returned only some disagreeably gruff sounds.

We arrived at Wandle Parsonage to find that every one of the family was absent from home, and a servant informed us that Mr. and Mrs. Ellice had gone to London for the day, and that Miss Ellice, with a young lady companion, had gone to the church in order to try the organ, which had been under repair.

My friend and I, of course, proceeded to the church, and, as we arrived, we had the satisfaction of hearing sounds indicative of the organ's being under trial, and knew that our fair friends were near at hand.

The sacred edifice was not one worthy of extended remark, being a construction of that Norman design which is to be seen everywhere repeated throughout England, consisting of a parallelogram of walls with moulded buttresses at intervals, and a square tower, with battlemented coping, occupying the western end,

while the eastern end is apsed, and pierced with round arched windows divided by balusters encircled with bands, and filled in with stained glass. I scarcely need say that ivy clustered in rank luxuriance round three sides of the massive tower.

"I have thought ivy to be in one sense like a typical Scotchman," said my companion, grimly, surveying the parasitical plant, "seeing it will even suck the blood out of a stone."

"Meaning, I presume, a bloodstone?" This idle turn to the conversation made Spinner laugh, and restored us to good humour.

The interior of this church afforded a very marked contrast to its outside; so much so, indeed, that on my entrance here, with the impression of the bare cold walls lingering upon my sight, I was startled by the abrupt change from cheerless plainness to attractive splendour.

The sunny light was streaming through windows of richly tinted glass, making the stone floor appear as though set with jewels. The chancel was portioned off from the nave by an ornamental brass railing, which now glittered with a dazzling sheen; while the sumptuous velvet of the stools, and the beautifully embroidered cloth of the altar, together with many splendid accessories in metals, fine

woods, and textile fabrics, made up a picture fitly typifying the laying aside of choicest things to the honour of the Omnipotent. A double row of columns with cushioned capitals were carried between the nave and aisles, and under the influence of a flood of mellowed light they stood out with imposing effect.

The western end was occupied by a gallery used as the choir, and there stood the organ all resplendent with gilded pipes, ornamented with diaper designs in bright crimson and blue tints. The whole effect was one certainly of high magnificence.

When Spinner and I entered this church it was filled with deep rolling sounds evoked by the deft fingers of the two maidens whom we had come to see. They were playing a duet, and were so intent with their task that, although my companion raised his voice to a considerably high pitch to make them aware of their having an audience, they took no notice, so absorbed were they with true artistic spirit in heeding alone the answering voices of their instrument.

Spinner proposed that we should go up to them, and we mounted the narrow stairs leading to the gallery, when the sound of our footsteps being detected by the fair organists, they

paused to ascertain who were their visitors. They both rose at our appearance, and nervously gave us greeting. Emily was evidently much agitated, for her usually pale complexion flushed up to an unnatural redness, and her fingers played tremulously upon my hand.

This was my first meeting with Emily since my illness, and I expressed to her my gratitude for the many acts of attention she had devoted to me. I could plainly perceive that, with her, inclination and obedience were divided, for while evidently desirous of bidding me welcome, she was yet restrained in her manner, as though she were under some harsh command which had been laid upon her.

She gently reproached me for absenting myself so long from the Rectory; and when I unceremoniously answered that I had not been invited to come even then, she somewhat impatiently rejoined that I might surely have taken the invitation for granted.

Spinner merely addressed a few words to Emily on shaking hands with her, and then gave his whole attention to the other young lady—a Miss White, residing in the neighbourhood—with whom he carried on an animated conversation respecting Gregorian chants.

Emily inquired of me how I was getting on

with my uncle, informing me of the report which had reached the Rectory, that relations between my uncle and me were not altogether satisfactory. I honestly confessed to her that report, in this instance, spoke the truth.

I could not exactly explain the reason for the estrangement which had taken place between my uncle and myself, so I was constrained to tell her merely that I was on the eve of throwing up the patronage of my rich relative. Upon hearing my resolution, she looked into my face so searchingly that I felt as though my secret thoughts were revealed to her, and I dropped my head to conceal my confusion from her gaze.

"Answer me this, Frank," said she, impressively, putting her finger upon my arm in the earnestness of her inquiry. "Have you consulted your conscience in the matter you speak of?"

"I cannot answer your difficult question off hand," I replied, feeling almost angry on being thus pushed to extremity.

"I am afraid, Frank, you are forgetting your duty," she remarked, sorrowfully, withdrawing her friendly finger from me. "Mamma says you are acting altogether wrongly; and

papa, who is your friend, cannot say a word in your defence."

In conversing together we had moved to the end of the gallery, and, to ensure our not being overheard by the other two, spoke in low tone. I would fain have avoided this serious consultation with Emily, as I knew that her advice could not possibly assist me in my present circumstances.

I observed that Spinner was covertly watching us during our earnest conference.

"I see, Emily, you have turned against me—like the rest," I said, reproachfully.

"Oh, Frank!"

"I have not, that I am aware of, broken either the law of God or man; and, therefore, I cannot understand why my friends should have turned against me."

"Frank," said the maiden, with gently solemn voice, pointing down to the altar, "go there, and kneel upon the step, and ask with your whole heart for light."

"I will do as you desire—when alone."

"That is well," quietly remarked the pure-souled girl, bestowing upon me a smile which seemed to refresh my whole being. Never before had I realized the transcendent value of a warm, friendly smile from a gentle soul,

to one who has suffered the loss of friends, and despairs of receiving again the kindly smile of encouragement. My heart leapt with gratitude.

We now rejoined the other two, and I was sorry to observe that Spinner seemed somewhat vexed. A feeling of discontent had evidently been stirred within him, in consequence of the warm personal interest exhibited by Emily towards me, and with that spirit which is usually manifested by a man when the woman whom he loves shows favour to another, while treating Emily, the offender, with gentle kindness, he displayed towards me a disposition of strong resentment. Emily did not, I could plainly see, reciprocate his tender regard, and I feared he would attribute his disappointment to me.

I marvelled at the strange nature of this man. He had come here to try and accomplish a great design, and it behoved him to exert every power of which he was possessed to make himself an agreeable wooer; but he seemed bent on earning for himself the character of one altogether indifferent to opinion.

I desired to serve his interests, and now introduced him to the young ladies as a skilful

musician. Strange to say, I found this had been unknown. The fair ones importuned him to sit down to the organ, which he did with ill grace. Having evoked a few discordant clashes of sound, he jeeringly remarked that the instrument had been inefficiently tuned, and played no more. I thought that it was the man who was out of tune, and not the instrument.

Emily appeared ill at ease in the presence of her uncomplaisant lover, and yet seemed desirous of humouring his caprices—if not, indeed, of waiting upon his arbitrary will.

"An organ is only a high development of the primitive pipes of Pan, as a cathedral is of the leaf-interlaced groves of that imagined tutelary god of Nature," said he, in answer to a remark made by Miss White on the worship-leading instrument. "A true musician cannot, however, be contented with any musical machine that does not allow him the management of it entirely to himself. Now you know it is impossible for a player to regulate an organ that is out of tune."

"And you consider ours to be out of tune?" said Emily, seriously, looking with deference upon the arbitrary authority.

"So much so," replied he, with evident con-

scientiousness, "that in common sympathy I pity any person with a true ear who is bound to sit here next Sunday."

"But worshippers do not go to church for the music," remonstrated the pious Emily.

"Certainly not, in strict sense," returned he, with a quiet laugh. "I dare say, however, that while worshippers are not attracted to church by musical inclination alone, in the event of the music turning out other than musical, they would speedily be found preferring to perform their devotions at home."

"You do not view the matter of worship in its highest light," said Emily, with censorious voice.

"I look upon it in an æsthetic light, which I conceive to be the one most congenial to a person of education," he remarked, almost impatiently. "I take it that, if simple earnestness of devotion be accounted the grand desideratum, the unlettered Methodist would constitute the pattern for us all to imitate."

"But man surely may worship earnestly in his heart," said I, with the desire of doing battle for the ladies, who by this time were looking somewhat dismayed, "while he is in the enjoyment of a refined atmosphere."

"My words only implied," answered Spinner,

turning on me with severe aspect, "that cultured man will surely find it difficult to worship in spirit, while his eyes and ears are being vexed."

"Then you assume the conduct of our religion," said Emily, with a touch of appeal in her voice, "to be more a thing of form than of deep emotional expression?"

"It all depends upon the proclivities and the original education of the worshipper," he returned, with evident reluctance to continue the subject, "whether any particular act of public worship may or may not be felt deeply by the heart."

"Yet Constantine, an Emperor," said I, "though educated as a pagan, was nevertheless pleased to accept Christianity when it was only the religion of slaves and obscure persons."

"Constantine embraced Christianity, no doubt, from motives of ambition, and not from any heartfelt love towards the then dissenting faith," he answered. "By virtue of his position, he was enabled to dictate his example upon the gentlemen of the Roman world, and so establish a supremacy of spiritual as well as temporal authority. But his endeavours having been guided entirely by personal considerations, and being at variance with the recog-

nized tenets of the time, proved altogether abortive; for Julian, his successor, revived the old State religion."

"Julian is called the Apostate," remarked Miss White, in accents almost of fear.

"The term Apostate, as applied to Julian, has been given from the spirit of spite, more than from that of fair judgment," he replied, boldly. "In justice to Julian, let us recognize the fact that he was cognizant of fierce bickerings which took place amongst the Christian bishops during his early years; and fearing, no doubt, the arrival of a time when, to use a vulgar saying, Jack would be as good as his master, he sought to re-establish the sacerdotal rule, which was essentially one of caste."

"Why, Mr. Spinner," said Emily, with a sudden flush on her countenance, "you must be yourself an apostate to speak as you have done."

"Pray, Miss Ellice, do not judge superficially of my probable backsliding," he returned, with manner as though he were gently admonishing a child. "I dare say that, had I lived in Julian's age, and been possessed of my present nature, I should have been an apostate. But, as I am taking my turn in the nineteenth Christian century, I stand in but little risk

of being tempted over to the ranks of apostasy."

"Oh, let us go for a walk," said Miss White, evidently afraid that she was acting wrongly by listening, in a church, to Spinner's bold enunciations.

"Yes," murmured Emily, absently, "le t us go for a walk while it is yet daylight."

The two maidens now quietly retired out of the church, and Spinner followed close behind them; but I, obedient to my promise, stayed in the sacred edifice.

My offering was not as I desired to make it, for all my efforts proved in vain to shut my ears to the murmuring voices of my friends who stood outside (just under the easternmost window), holding converse together.

I heard Spinner inquiring for me, and Emily replying to him that she believed I was well engaged at that moment, and that she wished me left undisturbed.

When at length I rejoined my friends, we all moved on into the fields. Presently arriving at an open meadow richly clothed with grass, and besprinkled with gem-like flowerets, we espied a group of expectant cows gathering around some women carrying stools and milk-

ing-pails, when the two fair ones of our company ran off to enjoy a draught of new-drawn milk.

Spinner, when left alone with me, gaily remarked that a little indulgence being claimed by the one side, there might properly be a similar claim made by the other. He then pulled out hiscigar-case, and, stretching himself upon a knoll clothed with wild thyme and short grass, lighted a cigar. I also threw myself down.

The prospect was indeed a glorious one. We lay in the full flood of sensuous light poured out by the setting sun. Everything had taken on a vivid character of light and shadow. Clumps of trees and hedgerows showed as though turned to masses of sombre breadth, with distinct outline, while the broad meadows were lit here and there with rays of rich warm light. A charming picture was afforded by the herd of many-coloured milch-cows, dark and clear of form, where they intercepted the dying sun's vehement fire, moving slowly to and fro, with patient heads all directed towards the women who were busy at work gathering in a milk harvest. The two idle young maidens, flitting about hither and thither, lent a changeful relief of gay

sound and motion to the cool and glowing landscape.

I observed that my companion's eyes were directed towards the idyllic scene, and that he looked upon it with admiring interest.

Presently he gave way to absorbed thought for a little while, and then he asked me what I had been doing while left alone in the church. I told him that my purpose in staying there alone was a pious one; and upon this he smilingly remarked, that the act of prayer, while no doubt commendable in its proper place and season, was, in his opinion, altogether wrong when simply performed to order, as in such case it could not be other than mere lip-service.

I answered him that, in my opinion, lip-service, so called, cannot fail to be received with some graciousness by the Most High; for, judging by our earthly experience, and which, indeed, is all we have to guide us in our conclusions, when we see that princes and other magnates receive the homage of their various subjects with a liberal interpretation of its being at least well meant, if not entirely inspired with heartfelt devotion, we are surely justified in assuming that Heaven may have

in such matter provided the earth with an example.

And again, with regard to the reverence consecrated to Heaven, I conscientiously stated that I thought it should be encouraged at all seasons whatsoever, as in time the praising voice will become linked in sympathy with the praising heart.

He was silent for a short time after I had finished my exposition, and then he asked, --"Were you led to do your late act of piety from the suggestions of your own spirit?"

I felt somewhat annoyed at being thus questioned; yet I kept my resentment well under, and deferred to my companion's inquisitiveness so far as to inform him that not my own conscience, but the voice of the good Emily, had prompted my act of veneration.

"You mean Miss Ellice, I presume?" he said, with a heavy frown upon his brow.

"Miss Ellice has been personally addressed in her Christian name by me for many a day," I answered in surprise.

"I wish you," he cried, springing impulsively to a sitting posture, and bringing his fist down forcibly upon the turf, "never again to speak to or of the rector's daughter by other than her title of Miss Ellice."

I felt it a difficult matter to decide as to what course I should take in this crisis. I plainly perceived that my companion was now crying aloud from the depth of his fevered passion, and that his spirit was being tormented by the gnawing pangs of self-invoked jealousy; and yet I could not think it incumbent upon me to submit to the exacting terms of his present claim.

I shrugged my shoulders and made a grimace, in token that I protested against his selfish request; whereupon he laid himself back again with an exclamation of angry impatience, and then smoked his cigar furiously.

It seemed to me as I looked on the great arch of heaven, all refulgent with the glory of the sinking sun, and the landscape lighted up as if with a magnificent smile of tranquil enjoyment, that I and my companion were incongruous blots on the peaceful scene.

Our two fair friends returned to us with their faces adorned by a sweet roseate hue, produced by their healthful exercise. An increased brightness was in their eyes, and a fresh ring of cheerfulness sounded in their voices.

"Why, I declare," cried Miss White, who was a merrily disposed girl, "you two young

order that he might have a chance of speaking with Emily alone.

I felt a great throb convulse my heart, and my throat grew dry, on hearing this request of my friend's. I had altogether forgotten his errand, and to be reminded of it at this unfitting moment jarred my feelings. I told him I considered him strong and bold enough to carry out his own arrangements without my active aid, when he replied that he had already been trying to get the lady of his affection to part company with her bosom friend, but without success.

It is, perhaps, sad to relate that I felt pleased to learn that some difficulty attended my friend's efforts to make his offer, and while I deemed it fit that Emily should have this man for her husband, I yet enjoyed a crooked feeling of satisfaction in knowing that he was already at his wits' end to find an opportunity to prosecute his suit. With regard to my own pleasure at my friend's experience of difficulty at the very outset of his enterprise, I would claim excuse with the plea that he would surely be more than man who, having tried to accomplish some particular task and only met with a heart-rending failure, would yet rejoice in seeing his neighbour accomplish a similar task with ease.

Spinner reproached me as a singularly ungenerous man for refusing to lend my aid to his proposed subterfuge to obtain some undisturbed conversation with Emily. Carried away by my offended feelings, I threw back his reproach, ambiguously declaring to him that the generosity which I had already exercised towards him was as much perhaps as any man had ever bestowed upon another.

"What do you mean?" he demanded, with his eyes fixed searchingly upon me.

"I cannot explain to you what I mean," I returned impetuously. "You will know some day, I dare say."

"Let us remember our duty," he said abruptly, and in an unfriendly tone. Now, with deceitful, smiling faces, we returned to our fair friends, whom we found engaged in examination of a field brook for water-cresses.

Emily had gathered a handful of various wild flowers, and was busy adding to her floral collection. The scene presented to my eyes at this time appeared so remarkably lovely that the remembrance of it will ever serve as a solace to me. The majestic sun had sunk low in the west, and his last fiery-red beams glared angrily upon the grey and russet landscape,

and sad, soft, and peaceful appeared all nature. Here and there were to be seen slow-moving figures of men and women, with shouldered implements, wending their homeward way, the one following the other in Indian file, suggestive of their being one and all exhausted by the labours of the day; and, as though to cheer the hearts of these children of toil, at intervals over the wide expanse spires of bluish smoke rose, and broke in misty distinctness against the variegated olive tints of the distant foliage, announcing the preparation of the evening meal. High overhead rode the moon, in beamless splendour, recalling to my mind the poetic line,—

> "The moon is up, and yet it is not night."

Æolus had ceased to vex the air, and a delicious silence reigned supreme. The rooted things of the earth seemed as though spellbound in their state of absolute rest.

Spinner and I loitered on the bank of the streamlet, regarding the maidens at their self-imposed task. Emily presently looked towards us with her exquisite countenance flushed by the last kiss of the lingering sun, and merrily said that she and her companion were searching for watercresses to be served up with tea

at the Rectory. Then she proceeded to invite us to share in that meal, and, at the same time, to inform us that, because of the absence of her parents, the dinner of the day was to be grafted on to the usual tea refection.

We were only too glad to accept the offered invitation, for, to our appreciation, the promised fare would be made quite royal when served at the hands of two such paragons of women.

"Please give me a flower, Miss Ellice," said Spinner, abruptly, after a short pause, during which he had contemplated the fine form of the stooping maiden. "It will be preserved by me as a souvenir of this most happy day."

"You shall have the best of my bouquet," answered Emily, readily, standing upright to present him with the little present he had asked for. "What tint of blossom do you prefer? You see, I have a great variety."

"A little pink flower will please me best," said he, reaching forth his hand. "I love red in all its manifestations, as it typifies strength as well as tenderness."

"Well, here is a purple columbine, and it is the first blossom of the kind I have seen this season," said the maiden. "It is a tender thing, and will fade within an hour."

"Oh, but I shall treasure it even when it becomes quite withered," remarked Spinner, adjusting the valued flower in his breast.

"Accept this one from me," cried the lively Miss White, presenting a giant daisy. Spinner courteously accepted the floral offering, but did not transfer it to the place of honour with the first little flower.

"And you, Mr. Frank?" said Emily, with pleasant voice, holding her hand in readiness to honour my choice.

"Give me a blue flower," I answered, without much thought over the matter.

"My favourite colour," remarked Emily, while looking out a choice example, and presently she presented me with a sweet spray of forget-me-not.

I noticed that Spinner's expression at once fell from one of happiness to that of despair, when he recognized the species of the blossom which I had received. Under ordinary circumstances, no doubt, he would have considered it childish to attach any particular importance to such a little matter as that of a flower-token; but now he evidently viewed the presentation of the little gift with as much anxious concern as was ever devoted by pagan adventurer to the diversions of the augurs.

His feelings must have been extremely sensitive at this time, for he actually heaved a sigh of relief, and his countenance became altogether livelier as he saw me accept from the generous hand of Miss White a big cluster of the ultra-fragrant bitter-sweet, and pass it through a button-hole along with the forget-me-not.

The sun was now below the horizon, leaving his after-glow vividly lighting up the west, while the moon, in the deep sky overhead, was beginning to assert her presence. We stayed for a few minutes to admire the beautiful effect exhibited by the union of the passing day with the coming night, and then proceeded on our homeward way.

We walked together in a very straggling fashion, sometimes being all abreast, and anon following in single file. The irregular manner of our journeying was not, however, a thing of choice, but of necessity, as our path was frequently barred by stiles, and oftentimes we encountered obstructions to our progress in the very midst of open fields in the form of recumbent oxen. We derived much enjoyment from the passages over the stiles, and much amusement from hearing the monotonous grinding sound attendant on the act of the oxen chewing the cud.

Emily and her gentle companion, unlike the vast majority of their sex, were not afraid of cattle; but, at the same time, while expressing their belief in the naturally gentle disposition of the cow, they invariably took care to give as wide a berth as possible to any one in their path possessing a fine pair of horns.

When we arrived at the church, which was now faintly illuminated by the yet half-determined moonlight, we heard the notes of a thrush piping out upon the solemn silence. Emily related that this little songster was said to have once belonged to a pretty boy who had been laid to rest in this churchyard but a few weeks before, when the bird, having been set at liberty, took up its quarters here, and every evening sang a requiem over the grave of its departed young master. Neither of us attached any superstitious interest to this simple, pathetic incident; but, for my own part, I am not backward to confess that, with regard to such apparently accidental forms of sympathy, I believe there exists in nature a capability of strangely featured attachments of which man, in his philosophy, as yet has taken very little account.

We could see the light from the lower windows of the Parsonage gleaming through the

intervening trees, and we were all very glad at the near prospect of a welcome entertainment. The girls, with the natural impulse of their sex, advanced in eager haste as soon as they caught a glimpse of the fiery beacons shining out from the haven of rest.

On our arrival at the Parsonage, we all hurried over our toilet preparations, and then re-assembled at the tea-table.

The dear girls declared it to be their pleasure that we two men should consider ourselves as honoured guests, and this mandate, proclaimed as it was by a supreme court, was loyally respected. Our hybrid meal possessed the advantage of enabling our fair young hostess to occupy the chief place at the table, with a rightful claim to it; and as the little feast presented many of the characteristics of a modest dinner, the spectacle of a Hebe sitting as president, and another as vice-president, added the zest of an agreeable exception to the usual rule, in addition to the other familiar sources of pleasure.

Spinner naturally required liberal dieting, and on this occasion, stimulated as he was by healthy exercise and fresh air, he made such a good account of the viands as must have astonished the gentle ones. Another of my

preconceived ideas was disestablished by the exhibition I witnessed of my friend's marvellous appetite despite the many vexations which he had sustained during the course of the day; for I had believed that a man while heart-wrung with love was always found dispossessed of keen relish, or even a natural desire, for food. Now here was a really true lover, in the very heyday of his passion, feeding himself like a Hercules, while even under the critical eyes of his chosen divinity. I saw the two young maidens exchange glances of amusement when their huge-feeding guest intimated that he was satisfied. I verily believe, however, that they, in a certain sense, admired this man because of his grand manner of consuming food.

Although a lion-like appetite in a man cannot be held to prove that the distinguished one is a hero, still, when it occurs in a healthy form, at least it betokens strength, and strength is an endowment standing very high in the esteem of woman.

On the conclusion of our repast, we all retired to the drawing-room, and there Emily exhibited some drawings, and also some illuminated manuscripts on vellum, which had been executed by her. The drawings were in colour, being mostly transcripts from nature,

and evidenced much high-toned feeling in the artist. But the greatest merit belonged to the illuminated writings, for these were masterpieces in execution, and were designed with Raphaelesque grace and cunning. I testified my unfeigned admiration of the exquisitely painted sermons limned by the hand of the pious Emily, while Spinner declared that not even in Rome, the citadel of Christian æsthetics, had he ever met with such inspired productions. His praise was of value, for he was an accomplished critic in all matters of high art.

Emily was affected with becoming modesty while the dual tribute of admiration was being showered upon her, yet she made no show of contemning her own merits. With great kindness of spirit, she, with the evident desire of giving her companion an opportunity of reaping in her turn a crop of laurels, proceeded to persuade that young lady to display her skill upon the piano.

As Miss White played one of Mozart's splendid pieces, Spinner remarked ruefully to me that he considered all the honours of the day had been carried off by the ladies, and that, while they had displayed themselves both intellectual and refined, we two oafs, to use his own distinguished title for himself and me, had

only proved ourselves possessed of such qualities as exist, to an eminent degree, in the parrot and cormorant respectively.

I thought that the remark was somewhat unfair as regarded its reference to my behaviour; but I entered no protest in the matter, as I noticed that he was again getting into a vexatious frame of mind, and I feared to risk the bandying of distempered words with him.

A strange obstinacy possessed him, for, notwithstanding the united pressing request of his fair companions, he still refused to exhibit his abilities as a skilful musician. I had been somewhat surprised to find that these young ladies were only that day made aware of the fact that he was a proficient in the science of music; but when I came to think the matter over, I saw that but little cause existed for my wonder at the reticence of this man, for he always acted in a strange manner; and I dare say now derived some stiffnecked pleasure from his persistent refusal to display his most eminent accomplishment.

The reception-rooms of the Parsonage were all on the ground-floor, and were furnished with casement windows, which, at the drawing-room side of the house, opened upon a light piazza, with creeping plants trained round the

supports thereof. Beyond was a lawn, incised here and there with parterres, all magnificent now with variegated bloom.

The night was radiant with the silvery beams of the nearly full moon, and a pale loveliness now appeared upon the calm face of Nature. Tempted by the charms contributed by heaven and earth, I unfastened the casement, and stepped out into the open air. I paced to and fro upon the lawn, revolving in my troubled mind a train of melancholy thought.

The rich tones of the pianoforte, struck forth by the accomplished hands of the maidens, who were now playing in concert, seemed, to my pensive imagination, like the voices of lost hopes and opportunities addressing themselves reproachfully to me.

As I lifted my eyes towards the reigning planet, I was startled to note the curious likeness she bore to a human face in the act of lamentation. It seemed to be mocking my own woebegone visage. My ruminations were presently interrupted by Miss White, who came to me and coquettishly asked permission to bear me company in my ghostly walk.

I attempted to answer my fair interlocutor in her own lively strain. I exerted myself to appear jovial, although really I was sad at heart.

For a good quarter of an hour we continued to stroll about the flower-garden together. With my abounding self-sufficiency, I presumed that this charming girl, by coming out to walk alone with me, had meant to afford me a fine opportunity of making love to her, and I felt vexed that my unresponsive mood forbade the least flirtation.

Woman, unlike man, is capable of sustaining an air of pleasantry under the most adverse circumstances. To please man is her especial mission. So strong is her desire to fulfil her mission, that she will strive to be complaisant even to brutality.

My indulgent companion maintained her high-spirited raillery and light-hearted merriment so undauntedly, that I began to imagine myself really very entertaining. It never occurred to me that mere fellowship did not necessarily imply wit. I soon felt that I was in a false position, and wished myself back in the house.

I now artfully inquired of the fair one if she did not think that the air was waxing cold.

"Cold?" she inquired, with concern. "Why you must surely be unwell. Take my shawl; I do not feel to need it. You should not have come out at all."

Feeling myself unable to cope with my sharp-witted companion in tactical competition, I tried to secure an honourable retreat by suggesting that by this time our friends in the house would probably be growing impatient for our return.

"Oh, stand not on the order of your going, but go at once," she said, impatiently.

I hastened, as in duty bound, to assure my fair friend that I derived much pleasure from my present situation, and further remarked that she should consider me as entirely at her command.

Alas! while I was flattering myself with the vain thought that the sprightly young maiden loved my company exceedingly well, she had succeeded in hoodwinking and altogether befooling me, and was secretly laughing at me for yielding myself from overweening conceit to her crafty design. My befoolment was as utter as that which once befell an ancient Athenian weaver, named Bottom. The truth dawned upon my obtuse mind when there appeared the figure of Spinner on the lawn, and the maiden, hitherto warmly attentive to me, abruptly quitted my company, and ran into the house. Spinner at once came to me, and, in answer to my hasty inquiry, said that,

through the good offices of Miss White, he had obtained at last an answer to a very momentous question.

"What is the answer?" said I, with palpitating heart.

"Guess," said he, curtly.

"Yes?"

"You 've missed it. Now guess again."

"Then it must be against you."

"You 've hit it. But why not have aimed straight at the first?"

"I do not understand you."

"Oh, Amor, Amor!" uttered the luckless lover, gazing steadfastly into my countenance. Presently he shook his head at me suspiciously, and smiled in the bitterest possible manner.

"Again I declare my inability to understand you."

"Oh, indeed!"

After a short, reflective pause, he heaved a deep sigh, and then strode off towards the house. I followed him in silence, resolving to force an explanation as to the meaning of his dubious words upon the first opportunity that occurred on our way home. He, however, disarmed my stern intention by facing round on me, just as we had reached the verandah, and preferring the request that I should forgive

his impulsive rudeness. We cordially shook hands, and then passed through the French window into the drawing-room, which we found unoccupied. Our eyes meeting, Spinner motioned towards the piano, and said, dejectedly,—

"There my dearest hopes were annihilated."

"You must ask again," returned I, desirous of alleviating my friend's apparent distress.

"Pray, Amor, spare me your advice," he answered, somewhat curtly. "Your nature is so diametrically opposite to mine, that any counsel you could give would be impossible of adoption by me."

I continued notwithstanding to exhort him to take heart, and try conclusions again with cruel fate. He paid no attention to my remarks, but continued to pace restlessly about, muttering to himself words of despondent nature. I remembered that this man had frequently jeered at me for giving way to my passionate impulses. I reminded him that his precept was totally at variance with his practice, whereupon he stopped short in his walk, and glaring resentfully at me, said,—

"You are utterly unable to appreciate the greatness of my failure."

"That does not alter the fact that you have

often twitted me for yielding to my feelings, and now here you are absurdly beside yourself because your admired one has not answered Yes at your first asking."

"Plato, thou reasonest well," returned the disappointed suitor, with a sneer.

"Take my word," pursued I, "Miss Ellice is not to be won easily."

"You seem to know a good deal about the matter."

"More than you do, I dare say," said I, foolishly, being somewhat provoked.

"What do you mean?" he cried, fiercely confronting me.

I became incensed at his manner, and gave him back as stern a look as his own. We stood face to face, fiercely regarding each other. But one word only was necessary to bring about a rupture between us for ever. Happily for both at this moment, Mr. and Mrs. Ellice, having arrived home, entered the room. After greeting us warmly, they expressed their regret that they had not been at home to receive us.

"Oh, I cannot share your regret," said Spinner, gaily, with a well-assumed laugh. "We were fortunate to find the young ladies bent upon spending the day in the

flowery meads. Our enjoyment has been of so high a nature that it deserves to be regarded in the light of a foretaste of Paradise itself."

Mrs. Ellice smiled, and nodded her approval, and, without deigning to bestow a glance on me, swept out of the room.

"And the girls treated you well, did they?" said the rector, with beaming countenance, drawing off his gloves.

"Oh, passing well!" answered Spinner, warmly.

"But, dear me!" said the minister, with surprise, "where are they now?"

"I rather think," said I, with amiable intent, "they have gone to see after some pressing household duties."

"I never heard of such a flagrant breach of hospitality," said the good man, wagging his head with air of censure. He then turned to Hugh, who had just entered the room, and bade him go and summon the delinquent fair ones to return immediately to their guests. Hugh was moving off to execute the command laid upon him, when Spinner arrested his purpose by imploring the dictator to withdraw his present mandate, and allow the grace of privilege to the two offending fair absentees. Mr. Ellice remained inexorable for a short time,

and even repeated his stern order; but on Hugh pleading that his mamma would no doubt bring the girls here in the course of a very few minutes, and I putting in my word for indulgence to the truants, the dictator conceded the favour asked of him. I could plainly perceive that Spinner was disturbed. I felt certain that his perturbation arose from his unwillingness to meet Mrs. Ellice again. It was one of this lady's peculiar characteristics to despise a man who was unsuccessful in any way whatever. Now Spinner was himself characterized by the same uncharitable cast of mind. He evidently feared to meet the cold glance which his ill success would bring upon him from that lady. The dreaded moment arrived only too speedily. The room door was pulled widely open, and in came the unamiable matron, bringing with her Miss White only. Considerable hesitation was displayed by these ladies on first addressing us at this time, and I fear that Spinner and I contributed greatly to increase the uncomfortable nature of the meeting. Mrs. Ellice's manner to Spinner was somewhat unfriendly; to me it was positively rude. I conceived the notion that she considered my presence here anything but desirable, and, further, that it had conduced to Spinner's dis-

comfiture. Miss White was very reserved in her manner. Judging, however, by certain side-glances cast in Spinner's direction, I am confident that she felt towards him a greater degree of respect than ever for the part he had lately essayed.

"Well, mother, where's Emily?" said the rector, cheerily.

"She is not very well this evening," returned Mrs. Ellice, with constrained voice.

"Nothing serious I hope, my dear?" exclaimed the worthy gentleman, with concern.

"Nothing to alarm yourself about," was the sharp reply.

"I never knew Emily taken suddenly unwell before now," commented Mr. Ellice, almost cowed by his wife's severe reply to his natural inquiry, and hopeful, no doubt, of having some fuller explanation volunteered him. The good man's gentle submission, however, was not treated with any indulgence, and his beseeching look proved of no avail to soften the heart of his tyrant.

"A little supper, perhaps, would set Emily all right again," said Hugh, whose healthful nature prompted him to consider food as a panacea for all simple weaknesses of the flesh.

Mrs. Ellice disdained to notice the suggestion of her hungry boy; but, now, seeing it to be her proper duty to vouchsafe an explanation of some kind to account for her daughter's absence, she, with ill grace, addressing no one in particular, said that Emily was suffering from severe headache, and could not therefore bear sounds of a loud nature.

The worthy minister, of course, pursued his inquiries no further, and seemed to understand that some unpleasant event had occured to mar the tranquillity of the household peace.

"The stars show remarkably bright this evening," he remarked, with an awkward attempt to appear at ease, and peering out at his celestial friends through the window. Mrs. Ellice on noting the direction of her husband's interest promptly stepped over to the attractive window, and pulling down the blind brought the docile man's enjoyable contemplation to an end.

Spinner now declared his anxiety to be on his homeward way, when Mrs. Ellice said, almost snappishly, that she hoped he and I would not depart without partaking of a little supper.

"A thousand thanks, madam," returned Spinner, urbanely; "but really my friend and I have no need for supper."

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Hugh, who having come off a long journey was naturally sharp-set, and therefore could not imagine any one undesirous of food. The rector did not fail to take his boy to task for his freedom of speech, and gave him some excellent advice upon the highly important subject of social etiquette. The mildly rebuking precept of the rector was perhaps accounted severe by its amiable recipient; but a far harder trial then awaited him. While he was being treated to his father's admonition, some whispered conversation had taken place between the two ladies. The upshot of it was announced by Mrs. Ellice, who commandingly bade the famishing boy to go and make himself ready to act as escort to the fair Miss White, together with her newly arrived maid, on their instant journey home.

Mr. Ellice ordered his brougham to be got ready to take Spinner and me to the railway station. I was congratulating myself that I should not be subjected to the dreaded private interview with my enemy, when, as ill-luck would have it, the rector suddenly discovered that no need existed for our departure for yet another half-hour. Upon this intimation my indomitable foe arose, and touching me upon the arm desired me to follow her into the dining

room. Of course, I obeyed. When we were seated, my merciless foe gave me so severe a rating that I at length became almost homicidically inclined.

"How, and where," said she, after her bitter tirade, "are you going to live after breaking off with your uncle?"

I answered that it was useless for her to speak of the matter if she desired to persuade me against leaving my uncle, as I had fully determined to take that step, and no argument could shake my resolution.

"Should you, Mr. Frank Amor, carry out your insane intention, and throw up your uncle's patronage, you must no longer consider yourself welcome here—or at Eaton Place."

"Has Miss Magnet said so?" I inquired, with troubled mind.

"I have said so, and that is enough," answered Mrs. Ellice, with that peculiarly calm voice which sometimes follows anger, and betokens implacability of purpose. I well knew that this self-willed dame, in the event of my contemning her authoritative decree, would see that the promise of her words should be fulfilled; but as I now felt sorely galled by her dictatorial manner of address to me, I tried to make it appear as though I doubted her

power to close any house saving her own against me.

Mrs. Ellice was, I could not help thinking, out of her proper sphere as the partner of a clergyman. It was surely a strange combination of circumstances that brought this unamiable lady into her present social position. Another matter for wonder existed in the fact that the children of this well-bred virago were each highly endowed with amiability.

"I will certainly leave my uncle," said I, almost defiantly.

"Then, in that case, I have nothing further to say to you," emphatically replied my adversary, sternly knitting her brows. Without uttering another word she stalked out of the room.

I felt glad to take my seat in the carriage, which was now waiting at the front door. My spirits became quite revived on having my hand warmly pressed by the benevolent rector, and on hearing him express many good wishes towards me. I suffered, however, a relapse of depression when, after some few minutes' delay, Spinner came out accompanied by Mrs. Ellice, and I was given the affront of having my hand refused by the obdurate lady.

The carriage had a folding top, which,

according to Spinner's desire, was left open. I sat opposite Spinner, with my back towards the horse. Happening to raise my eyes just as we started, I saw the blind of an illuminated window pushed slightly aside, and Emily's face, dimly discernible, peer down upon us.

"She is looking out at us," I remarked, in an undertone.

"Who?"

"Why, Em—Miss Ellice."

"You were about to say Emily, were you not?"

"Yes."

"Well—you are now at liberty," said my companion coldly, striking a light for his cigar, "to repeat that pretty-sounding name out aloud anywhere—and as often as you may choose."

"You are only mocking yourself, now," I returned, roused in temper at being subjected to almost continuous provocation.

"Will you answer this question?" he said, abruptly, leaning towards me, and staring me full in the eyes. "Have you any idea that Miss Ellice's affections are already engaged?"

"I am not in the lady's confidence so far as your question would assume."

"May I ask if you have ever considered yourself a particular favourite of Miss Ellice's?"

"Come, Spinner," I cried, with offended feelings, but yet anxious to avoid a quarrel with this now desponding man, "you are going too far in your freedom with me."

"That is because you are so exceedingly open of disposition," said he, sneeringly, striking another light for his cigar, which really needed no relighting.

"Remember," said I, with warning voice, "I am willing to bear with your present infirmity of temper to a moderate extent only."

"Oh, dear discretion, how his words are suited," uttered he, quoting with malevolent design from the Bard of Avon.

"What have I done to merit your insulting innuendoes?" I inquired, with difficulty restraining my anger, being yet willing to overlook my distempered companion's provocation should he refrain from further wounding my feelings.

"Who shall be trusted, now, when one's right hand is perjured to the bosom?" said he, again quoting from his favourite author.

I now felt very greatly annoyed by the unfriendly attacks made upon me by my esteemed right-hand friend, and my feeling of offence

was much intensified on remarking the self-possessed manner in which he had conducted his attacks.

Now, on finding myself assailed by my whilom friend with pointed sarcasms borrowed from the quiver of a great master, I winced in spirit under the undeserved infliction. My first feeling was one of unhappy confusion, owing to the unexpectedness of the attacks; but in time I recovered my fortitude, and then I showed Mr. Spinner that he had all too lightly valued my powers of retaliation. With scornful voice I addressed him, declaring it to be my opinion that he was not generous enough to carry on his hostilities in an open manner, but must needs shoot his bolts, Teucer-like, with the means at hand of an easy retreat. He partly arose from his seat on hearing my scornful accusation against his manner of conducting himself as a belligerent, and glared down upon me with an expression of intense fury. "Amor," uttered he, with his whole mind in his voice, evidently no longer careful to observe any scrupulousness towards me, "your words would impose upon most men, and persuade them into the belief that you were one who wears his heart on his sleeve. But you cannot so deceive me, for I know you are a

hypocrite—one, who indeed, bids fair to outrival Iago himself in the masterful practices of deceit!"

"Spinner!" I ejaculated, almost dumbfounded.

"Yes, Mr. Frank Amor," continued my accuser, with his face so transformed with deadly rage as to positively exercise a fascination upon me, "you know it is the truth I utter in charging you with the commission of a double-faced and altogether damnable line of conduct in the late affair which has proved so disastrous to my dearest hopes."

"What!"

"Yes, Janus, I am now aware—but, alas! all too late—that I have to ascribe my grand failure to your art; for while you were cunningly leading me to believe that you were willing to befriend me in my suit, at the selfsame time a letter from your own hand, breathing affection, was in the possession of the very maiden whose favour I was seeking to obtain."

It was terrible to me to encounter the hate-expressing eyes of my nearly mad companion, and my feeling of alarm was greatly assisted by the knowledge that a modicum of truth lay in his fierce accusation. It was true, I had sent a friendly missive to Emily and her mother, in which I had expressed my gratitude

to them for their kind solicitude exhibited towards me, while I was lying helpless upon the confines of life and death; but I certainly had not indited any expression which I was not fairly entitled to use.

"Have you then seen my offending letter?" inquired I of my intemperate accuser, feeling anxious to know how far his knowledge of my offence extended. He remained silent for a minute or two, evidently cogitating whether he should or should not explain to me the extent of his disturbing information. Presently turning his face again towards me, he said that he had not seen my offensive letter, and did not expect or desire ever to see it, but that its tenor had been confided to him by Mrs. Ellice, during the few minutes immediately preceding his departure from the Parsonage. I indignantly denied his aspersions, and, beside myself with anger, I concluded by shouting that I should certainly exact from him as ample an apology as his insult called for.

"Tell me, sir," he cried, commandingly, "did you write in an affectionate strain to Miss Ellice?"

"I will give you no information whatever on the subject," I answered, with spirit.

"You have said you will call upon me to

give you ample satisfaction, in the event of my finding it impossible to substantiate my present charge against you?"

"Most certainly."

"Then I shall as certainly expect you to make good your swaggering threat," said he, with a bitter smile. Then lying back upon his seat, he partly closed his eyes, as though to intimate that he desired no more conversation upon the subject.

I felt glad to be spared any further provocation from my companion, to excite me to the miserable work of destroying our bonds of friendship one by one, in the fierce fire of anger which had been kindled between us. As I followed his reposing example, with sorrowful reflection, I inwardly repeated the awful words of the Apostle, — "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." I looked around and saw only gentle peace, and my soul became chastened by the influence of the night. At this time the moon rode overhead, rendering glorious the star-spangled dark azure of the heavens. No air was stirring. All things appeared in a state of absolute

suspension. My companion lay back listlessly upon the soft padded cushions of the carriage, whiffing his cigar with apparent enjoyment; but his exhibition of ease failed to deceive me, for several times I detected his eyes stealing an inquisitive glance at my countenance, as though he wished to divine what was passing in my mind. The distempered scene which had occurred between him and me seemed now, to my reflective mind, as a dreadful dream. I could scarcely realize that an understanding had been concluded between us, to the terrible effect that, in the likely event of certain stated conditions failing to be fulfilled, we should meet together with the intent of trying which one of us might strike the other dead.

Upon reaching the railway station, Spinner took his seat in a compartment of the train that was in waiting, without bestowing any notice upon me, and I, offended at his uncivil conduct, entered another.

On the road home I felt very despondent, and thought my case the hardest possible. But a harder trial than any I had yet met with awaited me on my arriving at the terminus. This took the form of an arrest of my person. As I stepped upon the platform a police agent

came up to me, and, in a considerate undertone, stated that he had been commissioned to accompany me to my uncle's house. In answer to my anxious inquiries, he informed me that I was now taken in custody on the charge of unlawful possession, as certain valuables belonging to my uncle had been found concealed in my sitting-room. I presently observed the hateful form of Stoat standing well back from the train. A hypocritical look of concern sat upon his satyr-like countenance. I felt a stronger repugnance than ever towards this man-monster, on considering that he had come here, no doubt, for the purpose of identifying me, and gloating over my humiliation. The shameful charge preferred against me was conceived solely out of the devilish ingenuity of my enemies to compass my utter ruin.

At this moment Spinner came up, and inquired what was the matter, and, on my informing him, he was generous enough to offer to accompany me to my uncle's house, and render whatever help he could afford towards the maintenance of my fair reputation.

"I neither want nor desire your aid in this pitiful matter," returned I, with conflicting feelings. "I feel confident of being able to

blow away this new mote of evil at a breath."

My attention was so much occupied with my strange friend, that for the moment I forgot the fact of my being under arrest. But my painful situation recurred to my mind when I got into a cab, and saw my uncle's creature mount upon the outside seat, and the police officer, after exchanging a few words with Spinner, quietly enter after, and take the seat beside me. With mingled feelings of anger and despondency, I brooded over the unhappy course which events had taken, and was only aroused from my gloomy thoughts by a touch on the elbow from the detective, who, now that the cab had drawn up opposite my uncle's house, desired me to alight.

"Mr. Amor," cried the creature of my especial aversion, following close at my heel, as I strode impetuously up the garden pathway, "you must not try to see Mr. Gall this evening, as he is very unwell."

"Let Mr. Gall himself say so," I returned fiercely, facing round on the wretch. The police officer laughed at my hasty rejoinder; and feeling annoyed at the disrespect shown me, putting aside all considerations of propriety,

I ran into the house, and attempted to obtain an unannounced entrance into my uncle's room. I found, however, I was unable to effect my purpose, for my wary relative had taken the precaution to fasten the door, and returned no answer to my noisy summons for admittance to his presence.

Retiring to my own room, I found everything there apparently undisturbed. Chund was standing at the door. He reverently saluted me as I passed him. But a few moments had elapsed when I was waited upon by the police officer who had accompanied me home. He was now so far attentive as to introduce to me a comrade, who had been commissioned to assist him in his professional job. My unwelcome visitors were studiously polite to me, indeed far too much so for my liking. The chief one deliberately laid a parcel of gold trinkets and coins, together with some precious stones, upon my table, and with a great show of respect invited me to lend my attention to what he had to say. I motioned impatiently for him to go on, and stood still to hear him. He then proceeded to inform me that my uncle, having lately missed some of his precious things, had given notice at the police office that same day, when a search was promptly instituted, resulting in the dis-

covery of the missing articles at the back of my window-shutters.

"Shall I name the person who hid them there?" said I.

"It is my duty to caution you, sir, that what you say may be used against you," replied the myrmidon of justice.

"Methinks that in this case we shall see the engineer hoist with his own petard."

"You won't think us rude, sir," blandly said the officer, "but we must trouble you now to turn out your boxes."

I knew it was useless for me to deny the official's request, so, without a word of remonstrance, I drew forth my keys and threw them upon the table. Turning to Chund, I ordered him to convey to my uncle the message that I urgently required an interview with him, and should not rest until I obtained it. Chund's usual movements had become associated in my mind with those of a cat, being of a slinking, noiseless character. On this particular occasion his manner of locomotion appeared to me very cat-like, for I had scarcely taken my eyes off him for a moment, when, looking back again, expecting still to behold him, I found he had departed; and my sensitive ear failed to detect the least sound to

betoken that he was pursuing his way downstairs.

The police agent proceeded to empty my boxes and portmanteaux, which, on the preceding night, I had packed with my personal property. As I contemplated the disarrangement of all my things, I felt indignant to observe that each article was being subjected to a careful examination. I felt now irresistibly impelled to continue moving to and fro. By a sort of fascination I was constrained to watch the operations which outraged most painfully my feelings. I strove hard to avoid showing my agitation; but, despite my anxious effort to preserve my self-control, I at one moment involuntarily yielded to my pitiful exasperation in the most foolish possible manner. One of the searchers had laid, by accident, one of my coats upon my line of march. On my reaching it I senselessly kicked it aside with my foot. This impulsive deed afforded me, I am bound to confess, only additional vexation, and at the same time evidently lowered me in the estimation of my humble companions.

"I beg your pardon," said I, instantly ashamed of my thoughtless conduct, and observing the officials staring at me with surprise.

"Only wait, sir, till we are finished," replied the agent-in-chief, with a mocking laugh; "you may then kick every one of your things about the room to your heart's content."

Chund was absent a long time. I was beginning to despair of his ever coming back, when, on turning my eyes towards the door, I was startled to behold the stealthy Indian standing at the threshold, waiting with his usual submissiveness to get my word to deliver himself of the answer to my message. I made an impatient sign, whereupon he, while performing a deliberate salaam, chanted the intelligence that "Sahib Gall" was willing to see me at once.

I stayed not an instant, but ran downstairs in hot haste to speak with my bitter-hearted uncle, and finding the library door still locked, I applied my knuckles to it in a very vigorous style. I knocked for some time without receiving any answer, and at length surmising that my uncle had stupefied his brain with an opiate, I was addressing myself to find out the precise way of producing the loudest noise with the least possible amount of physical suffering, when the door was pulled hastily open, and I stood free to enter the room. I had calculated on meeting my uncle alone;

therefore, great was my annoyance at finding myself face to face with no less formidable a person than the ex-warrior, whose doughty deeds had given rise to the sobriquet, "Tiger Jack," who admitted me to my uncle's presence.

I found my relative, as usual, occupying his wheeled chair. For a moment or two I completely lost my presence of mind, owing to my surprise at meeting the blustering captain. I entered the room with a look on my countenance, I am afraid, pitifully at variance with that which might reasonably have been expected of me, judging from my clamorous demand for admittance. "Sir," I said impulsively to my uncle, advancing close to him, "you must surely be wishing now to drive me mad."

"You are mad already," replied he, without the least hesitation.

"Mad, or else bad," chimed in the unscrupulous supporter.

This reception took me completely unawares, as I had expected a scene of mutual recrimination, and certainly had not calculated on being treated as if I were considered not strictly accountable for my conduct.

"Uncle!" cried I aghast, "you know you lie in saying I am mad."

"Bad 's the word, I should say," uttered the time-serving man of war, with a look at his unprincipled patron.

"Appearances tend strongly to prove," said my uncle, with vindictive emphasis and violent gesture, "that you are not contented with robbing me of my peace, but you must needs, it would seem, endeavour also to rob me of my most valuable property."

"As for the attempt to steal your property, with which you charge me," I cried, wildly, unable to wage battle in the wary spirit I had thought to find myself capable of employing in this field of unequal contention, "the evidence thereof, I feel certain, is entirely of your own base planning."

"Note what he says," exclaimed my unhappy relative, turning his death-like visage towards his burly confederate.

"I am taking note of it," returned the Captain, with cautionary emphasis, intended evidently to overawe me.

"Well, then," said I, with my spirit thrilling now with a sudden strange pleasure in my utterly friendless condition, "take note that I denounce my uncle as a thoroughly bad man,

and cite as proof of my assertion the fact that he chooses the very worst members of his kind for his intimate companions."

"What, sir!" shouted the Captain, advancing a step towards me in a threatening manner; "do you refer to me in your present scurrilous charge?"

"Yes, I do," returned I, boldly confronting him.

He raised his hand to strike me, when I had given him my very candid answer; but relinquished his intention of violence on seeing me seize a stone idol wherewith to defend myself.

"You will have before long to come down on your knees for what you have just now dared to say—you young reprobate!" said the irate Captain, prudently retiring to my uncle's chair.

The vile epithet, "reprobate," which this fellow had addressed to me, acted with an almost maddening effect on my spirit, goading me into the desire to have a mortal encounter with him. Thus inspired I now eagerly searched the storehouse of my memory to find something wherewith to retaliate upon my ruthless assailant. "Look well to your own honour, Captain Melrose, *alias* Somerville," I cried, jeeringly, suddenly remembering certain

information obtained from Spinner. "Remember the Minories, and Iceland Moss."

Never have words confounded a man with greater force than did mine the Captain. On my retort, he started back a step or two in dire confusion, and grew exceedingly flushed in countenance. It afforded me much interest to observe the violent contrast in complexion between the two men confronting me, the Captain in his state of consternation appearing of a fiery redness, while my uncle bore his usual leaden pallor. I was further interested presently to note that the pallid man was keenly observant of the lively exhibition of dismay taking place upon the twitching features of his companion.

"What does he mean?" curiously inquired my uncle of the Captain, and at the same time betraying that he experienced some pleasure in the distress of his bosom friend.

"Your precious nephew has spoken like an oracle," replied the Captain, having recourse to his pocket-handkerchief for the indulgence of an apparently superfluous blowing of his nose. "I am quite in the dark as to his meaning, and therefore must trouble you to apply to him for it."

"I shall bide my time," said I, with a por-

tentousness, I fear of greater degree than I was fairly justified in using.

"Mysterious again," remarked the Captain, dryly. "Why, Mr. Gall, we are having a revival of the old Delphic performance."

"The young man's words would invest you, captain, with a Protean character," said my uncle, with a malicious chuckle.

"The young man, I believe, has taken a drop too much, and consequently sees double," said the Captain, with affected pleasantry, helping himself to some brandy from a decanter standing near him upon the table.

"If that is his present case," said my uncle, looking suspiciously at me, "he must be considered as dishonest even to himself."

"A fig for your virgin honesty!" cried the Captain, with a contemptuous snap of his finger and thumb. "Why, every fit man is dishonest at odd times, in one way or another." It was evident to me he was labouring under the discouraging fear that I was possessed of a talisman potent to bring about his humiliation; and, indeed, for that matter, I myself was of the opinion that I had only to amplify my knowledge of the thing I had chanced to hit upon to become an absolute dictator to him. "D—n it all!" cried he, after gulping a glass

of Cognac, looking towards my uncle and observing no sign of encouragement on his leaden features. "Then you would egg on this vain boy in his vapouring against me?"

"No, no," returned the uncongenial one, with but half-hearted emphasis.

"None of your double Noes for me," snarled the man of war. "Fire the word out all alone, or withhold it—just as you may think proper. Never make a verbal chain-shot of it."

"I really believe nothing of my nephew's aspersions against you, Captain," whined my uncle.

"I believe you are saying one thing and meaning another," cried the Captain, with an expression on his coarse features suggestive of that of an enraged hyena. "Now, friend Gall, I must caution you to beware of playing with 'Tippoo Jack.'"

I observed my wretched relative wince under the rude words of the Captain, and I took the opportunity of giving him a severe thrust or two while he was still quaking in craven-hearted fear of the terrible warning of his quondam friend.

"Come, come, Mr. Hamlet," said the man of war, with expostulatory voice, noticing that the object of our mutual reproach was so deeply

affected as to be obliged to gasp for his very breath, "let us have a change in the programme. We have each spoken one against the other with a sharp tongue ; now let us have on a pleasant scene, in which we shake hands all round, and forgive each other."

"I shall never again shake hands with either of you," disdainfully said I; "you have both foully conspired to ruin my honour, and now I would rather submit to have my right hand cut off than sully it by grasping either of yours."

"Hold hard!" cried the Captain, with shaggy brows lowered in fierce anger, bestowing upon me the most threatening expression of his one terrible eye. "I must now warn you that I shall stand no more of your insolence, and only require another word of the kind to make me bind you over to meet me at some time and place to be agreed upon to try and settle the question which of us is the better shot."

I saw my uncle's face twitching with evil pleasure when his formidable friend bullied me, and this sight, together with the Captain's minatory words, excited my feelings almost to a pitch of madness.

"Come, then, Captain," I said, advancing up to my burly enemy in that strained manner of composure which always marks the herald of

the awaiting Furies, "call on me now to engage with you in the trial you threaten me with. Here are weapons to choose from," said I, with a sweeping movement of my hand, "and here is my uncle, who may act as umpire, to see fair play between us."

The Captain stared back at me with amazement, and returned no answer for a few moments. Then, looking with an almost scared countenance towards my uncle, with a changed, husky voice, he put the question,—"What do you think of it?"

"Oh, not here," returned my uncle, with an expression of mingled eagerness and nervous dread, "but in the back garden—if you like."

I felt my heart give a great throb on hearing my uncle's answer, and involuntarily I clenched my teeth and closed my hands as though grasping something very tightly. Fear suddenly took possession of me, and I turned my face to the wall for a few moments in order to hide my perturbation.

"I cannot accompany you—but—that will make no difference," continued my uncle, with a strangely eager, whispering voice.

"How is it to be, Captain?" I cried, with revived courage, turning round upon my enemy.

"Not at all in the way you propose, I promise you," returned he, with an ill-assumed air of *nonchalance.*

"You are afraid, I believe," scornfully said I, perceiving that the Captain was secretly disposed to back out of his present difficult position.

"Here is a pretty thing I am asked to do now!" shouted he. "To go out, near twelve at night, into a garden, and fight a boy—with spades or billhooks as weapons. No! oh no!" he cried, with increased vehemence. "I am not willing to take part in an affair having its conditions borrowed from the rowdies of San Francisco."

"Why, then," I inquired, to the Captain's confusion, "did you put your question to my uncle?"

"I am a soldier, *sans peur et sans reproche,* and have taken part in a hundred battles," roared he, growing purply red again. "I love fighting only too well, and am therefore not the man to refuse putting my hand to a proper duel. But dam'me if ever I consent to go out in the manner now proposed—by a dusty clerk and a half-crazed medical student."

I laughed contemptuously at my hectoring enemy; and my uncle gave his man a look

which was, I take it, even more effective than my laugh.

"Catch me attempting any Quaker duty again!" continued the Captain, changing his voice to an indignant pitch. "Dam'me, I have gone through hot and cold for a time—extending over twenty-five years, carrying my sword in my hand, and never in all my campaigning experiences found myself so outrageously put upon as I have been within the last five minutes. Peacemaking is, I am bound to believe, a blessed business; but I should say, judging from my present experience, that it is a business certain oftentimes to land its apostles into grief." The Captain, no doubt, saw that his reputation as a ready warrior, which he was so eager of maintaining, stood in considerable jeopardy, and, with the design of saving that precarious good name, he attempted, in a Chinese fashion of valour, to make good by means of rude bluster his deficiency of true manhood. "I thought you a different man from what I find you really are," he said, morosely, to his pseudo-friend.

"So did I you," replied my uncle, with a sneer.

I forced a mocking laugh. It proved unfortunate, as both my enemies were equally

annoyed, and resentfully coalesced once more from the desire to bring about my humiliation. I was convinced of my indiscretion when I beheld the faces of my foes turned towards me with the expression of malignant enmity shooting from them; the one appearing to my sight as a fitting presentiment of an evil-boding fate, being cadaverous and altogether death-like; the other as that of a satyr, being inflamed and highly distortive.

I hurled defiance at these two dark-souled ones, bidding them remember that I feared not their machinations against me, for I felt confident that I should ultimately triumph over them. "All good men who may judge between us," concluded I, "cannot fail to perceive the utter baseness of your motives in this matter. Further, as it must be perceived that I have scorned to accept any terms whatever at your dishonourable hands, the whole world will certainly be found to favour me."

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY E. J. FRANCIS AND CO.

TOOK'S COURT AND WINE OFFICE COURT, E.C.